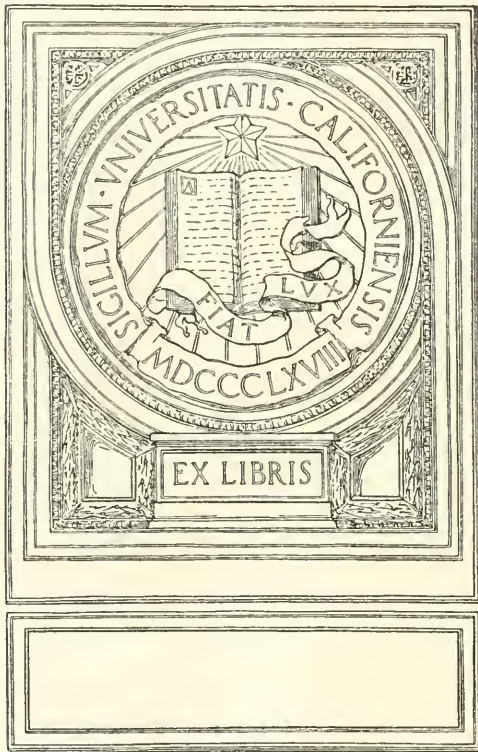




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THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

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MCMX,

THE POETS
OF
DUMFRIESSHIRE

BY
FRANK MILLER
ANNAN, DUMFRIESSHIRE

“Is there hearing for songs that recede?”
SWINBURNE

GLASGOW
JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS
PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS work consists of a sketch of Dumfriesshire poetry, ancient and modern, with biographical notices of the different poets, and illustrative selections from their writings. In the first chapter the famous Anglo-Saxon poem preserved in the runes on Ruthwell Cross is described, reference being made to the investigations of Stephens, Cook, and Brandl, on the subject of the inscription; the question whether Blind Harry, who had an exceptionally good knowledge of the topography of Nithsdale, was personally connected with Dumfriesshire is discussed; and such figures as the Latin poet James Crichton, styled 'The Admirable,' and the half-forgotten dramatic writers, Lodowick Carlell and Dr. Christopher Irving, are introduced. The three chapters that follow in succession are devoted almost exclusively to that ancient popular verse to which the student must go for what is vital in the history and characteristic in the literature of the Western Border. From poems racy of the soil attention is turned to the hymns and addresses of Blacklock, works as English in thought and expression as if they had been produced in Kent or Salop. After treating of several disciples of Pope and Gray, the author proceeds, in the sixth chapter, to speak of Burns, who spent the last eight years of his life in Nithsdale. The influence of the chief Scottish poet over succeeding writers in the county has been great; but, as readers of the second half of the book, in which a view of Dumfriesshire poetry in the nineteenth century is presented,

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will agree, it has never been quite equal to that exerted by the ancient minstrels of Eskdale and Annandale.

In choosing the examples of verse, the author has been guided in the great majority of cases by considerations of poetical merit only; but space has been found for a few pieces which, though of small intrinsic value, are yet invested with historical interest or have become popular. Many of the poems reproduced were taken from very rare volumes, and some from the original MSS. Among those printed for the first time are a fragment of an old version of 'The Lochmaben Harper,' giving an addition to the story of the Harper as told in seven known texts of the ballad; the hymn by Blacklock which was the source of the favourite paraphrase, 'In life's gay morn'; and curious pieces by William Irving, author of 'Lag's Elegy,' the Rev. James Gatt, minister of Gretna from 1730 to 1787, and Kirkpatrick Sharpe.

The researches of the writer were courteously facilitated by the Director of the British Museum; the Keeper of the Advocates' Library; the Librarians of Edinburgh University, and the Mitchell Library, Glasgow; the Editors of *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, and *The Annandale Observer*; the Committee of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Antiquarian Society; and the Kirk Session of Gretna. The names of the many private collectors to whom he is also indebted for material assistance are given in appropriate places in the body of the work; but he must here record his sense of peculiar obligation to Dr. George Neilson, Glasgow, author of *Trial by Combat* and *Huchown of the Awle Ryale*, who, besides lending him scarce books and pamphlets, read the whole text of this anthology; to Mr. William Macmath, Edinburgh, the late Professor Child's indefatigable helper in the compilation of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*—whose favours included the loan of a beautiful facsimile copy of the Glenriddell MS., made by himself, and of a large collection of Kirkpatrick Sharpe's MSS.; to Mr.

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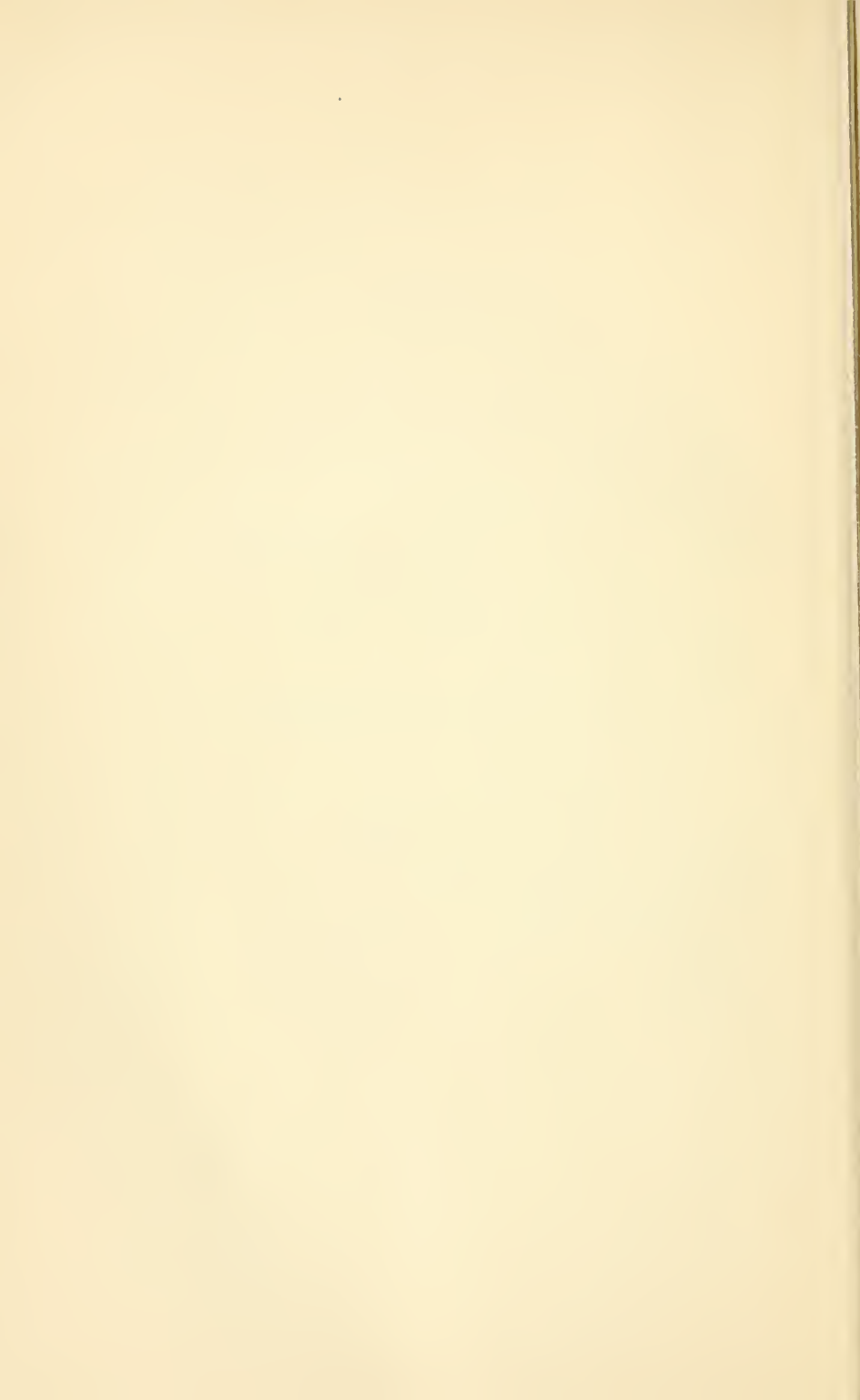
William Duncan, B.A., rector of Annan Academy, who was consulted on points in connection with the interpretation of various seventeenth and eighteenth century Latin poems; and to the writer's brother, Mr. P. L. Miller, Glasgow.

Embodying the results of original research carried on for many years, this book may have a claim to generous consideration. It is addressed primarily to natives of Dumfriesshire; but, as not a few of the poets whose writings are described have more than provincial fame, it may also appeal to some lovers of verse who never even saw the 'winding Nith' or the 'castled' Kirtle.



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I

EARLY POETS

IN the parish kirk of Ruthwell, about seven miles from Annan, may be seen an ancient cross, sculptured with quaint and beautiful figures, mostly designed to illustrate scenes in the life of our Lord. According to local tradition the column stood originally at Priestwoodside, now called Priestside, near the Solway, and was taken to Ruthwell by a company of angels. Erected, at an early period, in the church, it remained there for many centuries, an object of high veneration. Long after the Reformation the old monument, notwithstanding its 'Popish' symbols, was allowed to stand; but in 1642 its demolition was decreed by a fanatical General Assembly. The local authorities were not Vandals; and having partially obeyed the order of the ecclesiastical court by throwing down the 'idol,' they left the pieces into which it was broken, probably by the fall, on the floor of the kirk.

When Pennant visited Ruthwell in 1772 the fragments of the great cross were still lying within the church; but a few years later they were removed to the churchyard, an increase in the population of the parish having rendered necessary the utilisation of all available space in the little temple. In 1823 the monument was restored to its original form and set up in the manse garden by Dr. Henry Duncan, and in 1887 it was placed by the Rev. James M'Farlan in an apse which had been added to the church for its reception.

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On the narrow sides of Ruthwell Cross, round some beautiful vine scroll work, are the runic inscriptions which give it a unique interest. These inscriptions contain one of the earliest-known specimens of English literature—a small fragment of a poem on the Passion of Christ in the old Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon. The runes were first deciphered by John Mitchell Kemble, who gave the true rendering in an article published in 1840,¹ and was afterwards able to show that the lines on the column were a quotation from ‘The Holy Rood: a Dream,’ of which the entire text in a South-English form exists in the tenth-century Vercelli Codex. The meaning of the runes on the sides of the Cross having been placed beyond doubt, Anglo-Saxon scholars in England and on the Continent proceeded to discuss the date and authorship of ‘The Holy Rood.’ In a monograph which furnished an accurate translation of the complete poem, Professor George Stephens of Copenhagen argued that the Cross dated back to about 680, and attributed the lines which it has preserved to Cædmon. There is force in his contention that the ‘Cross-Lay’ bears the marks of composition ‘in an age when heathendom had but lately been laid aside, its mighty traditions still strong and fresh and impregnating everything, its spirit bound up in the language itself and reflected in a thousand native details.’² Ten Brink, Bugge, Sweet, and other eminent scholars, however, ascribe the verses to Cynewulf, the second English poet of mark, chiefly on the ground that, in their view, they are vitally connected with ‘*Elene*,’ a work in which the name of ‘Cynewulf’ is embedded in runes. The curious theory of Dietrich that Ruthwell Cross was erected by some noble of the Anglian district north of the Solway to perpetuate the memory of Cynewulf is rejected even by Ten Brink, whose claims for the author of ‘*Elene*’ are extravagant enough. A yet

¹ ‘On Anglo-Saxon Runes,’ by John M. Kemble, in *Archæologia*, vol. xxviii. p. 352.

² *The Ruthwell Cross*, Cheapinghaven, 1866, p. 29.

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later period than the second half of the eighth century, when Cynewulf flourished, is assigned to the Cross-Lay by Mr. Albert S. Cook, who by a comparison of its linguistic forms with those of documents the age of which is already better ascertained has been led to the conclusion that the inscription 'is at least as late as A.D. 950.'¹

Of course the mere fact that the rhythmical inscription on the column was taken from 'The Holy Rood: a Dream' affords no warrant for the conclusion that the poem quoted was written in the part of Strathclyde which for a time was under the rule of Northumbria. But, wherever composed, the lines 'carved on the lasting stane' at Ruthwell owe their preservation in the original form solely to a Dumfriesshire monument, and it therefore seems appropriate that they should occupy a place in this anthology. The version of the runes here given is that of Professor Stephens, who has retained the metre and a few of the 'characteristical words' of the original. Though the poem is Christian in spirit, its phraseology is mythic. According to the learned Danish professor, the use of the word 'streals' (missiles) in the twenty-second line of the fragment affords evidence of 'that silent melting of the Mythical Baldor into the Historical Christ which took place all over the North.'² So profoundly was the poet's imagination affected by the most beautiful of the old myths, and so accustomed was he to link the name of the one heathen god who could be loved with that of the Divine Man, that quite unconsciously he gave a new shape to the story of the Passion. 'Christ did not die of Crucifixion or by being pierced in His side with a spear. He was *shot to death*. All sorts of missiles were hurled at him, wounding, dinting and bruising and jaggng the wood of the Cross, and at last one

¹ 'The Date of the Ruthwell Cross,' by A. S. Cook, in *The Academy*, 1st March, 1890.

² *The Ruthwell Cross*, p. 29.

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fatal STREAL—doubtless the Mistletoe—struck Him and He died !'¹

More recent studies of the Cross-Lay scarcely countenance the rather extreme Scandinavian tendency of this interpretation of a purely Anglo-Saxon poem. There is no need to postulate Norse mythology for its inspirations. One of the most distinguished of Anglo-Saxon scholars in Europe, Professor Alois Brandl of Berlin, has shown the relationship between the poem and the cult of the Cross, the *adoratio crucis* and festival of the Exaltation of the Cross introduced into Western Europe through Pope Sergius in A.D. 701. His chapter on the 'Stein von Ruthwell' and its 'Traumgesicht vom Kreuze Christi' in his just published History of Old English Literature² may be referred to as an admirable summary of the latest conclusions, accompanied by a bibliography. Of the poem he says, 'Its forms of words quite agree with the Northumbrian character of the locality; and both from the dialect and the district it may be supposed that the poet was a near countryman of Cædmon.'

TRANSLATION OF THE RUNES ON RUTHWELL CROSS.

(From Professor Stephens' *Monograph*, p. 20.)

Girded Him then
God Almighty,
When He would
Step on the gallows,
Fore all mankind,
Mindfast, fearless.
Bow me durst I not ;

* * * *

¹*The Ruthwell Cross*, p. 30. Baldor, or Balder, was killed at the instigation of Loki by a twig of mistletoe.

²*Geschichte der Altenglischen Literatur* von Alois Brandl. Strassburgh : Karl J. Trübner, 1908, pp. 90-92.

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Rich King heaving,
The Lord of Light-realms ;
Lean me I durst not.
Us both they basely mockt and handled,
Was I there with blood bedabbled
Gushing grievous from . . .

* * * *

Christ was on Rood-tree.
But fast, from afar,
His friends hurried
Athel to the sufferer.¹
Everything I saw.
Sorely was I
With sorrows harrow'd,
. . . I inclin'd.

* * * *

With streals all wounded.
Down laid they Him limb-weary.
O'er His lifeless head then stood they,
Heavily gazing at Heaven's . . .²

After Cynewulf's death there was a long period of literary inactivity in Anglo-Saxon Britain, due mainly to the distracting influence of the Danish wars. In the days of King Alfred much intellectual energy was again displayed ; but the second age of English literature, though rich in prose, yielded very little good verse. In the eleventh century the greater part of our island was conquered by the Normans, and everywhere south of the Tweed French became the medium of expression favoured by the cultured classes. The national tongue regained its place as the literary language of England in the fourteenth century ; and a great poetical revival, that extended to the English-speaking provinces of Scotland, soon followed. Among the early fruits of that revival were the alliterative romances of Huchown, the long under-rated Scottish poet who

¹To aid their *Atheling* or Prince.

²Heavily gazing at Heaven's *Chieftain* (*Vercelli Codex*).

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‘made the gret Gest off Arthure,
And the Awntyre off Gawane,
The Pystyll als off Swete Swsane.’¹

When the century was well advanced a ‘makar’ of the first rank appeared in England, and opened a new world of art to his countrymen. That the influence of Chaucer on the English poetical writers of the fifteenth century was immense is shown by a great body of verse which even yet has scarcely received adequate attention. In Scotland as well as in England the impulse given to poetry by

‘Reverend Chauser, ross of rethouris all,’²

was powerfully felt; and during the century and a half between his death and the publication of Wyatt’s and Surrey’s poems many highly valuable contributions to the treasury of British song came from the northern division of the island.

About a score of the ancient Scottish poets are mentioned in Dunbar’s ‘Lament for the Makaris,’ written early in the sixteenth century. Among the singers mourned in that poem is Blind Harry, who has always been associated with ‘The Actis and Deidis of the illustere and vailzeand Campioun Schir William Wallace,’ long the most popular of northern poetical works in the vernacular. Mr. J. T. T. Brown, a writer on early Scottish literature whose views at all times deserve serious consideration, has advanced a

¹Wyntoun’s *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, edit. Laing, vol. ii. p. 12. The investigations of Dr. Neilson have rendered the identity of Huchown with Sir Hew of Eglintoun probable in the highest degree. (See his *Huchown of the Awle Ryale* and *Sir Hew of Eglintoun*.) Unlike the celebrated Ayrshire poet of the eighteenth century, Sir Hew had never, so far as we know, any direct connection with Dumfriesshire; but it is interesting to note that one of his heroes is ‘Gawayne of the West Marches,’ and that he mentions familiarly enough the Lochar:

‘All the landes for sothe fro Logher to Layre.’

²Dunbar’s ‘The Goldin Terge.’

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theory that 'The Wallace' was virtually composed not by Harry but by John Ramsay, who wrote the unique MS. of the work now in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. This Ramsay, he 'inclines to think,' belonged to the Rammerscales family, owners at one time of much land in the neighbourhood of Lochmaben. He considers it probable that Harry was 'the begetter' of the epic; but in his view the tradition assigning 'The Wallace' as we have it to a blind man is negatived by the minute topographical knowledge and wide acquaintance with literature of various kinds displayed in the poem.¹

Having found some lines of poetry in the MS. of the Parliamentary Records for 1468, which he erroneously ascribed to the same penman as the Wallace MS.,² Mr. Brown concluded that Ramsay, whether a composer of verses on the national hero or not, was a genuine 'makar,' and tried to identify him with Schir John the Ross, who figures in Dunbar's 'Flyting' and 'Lament.' Ramsay was a chaplain, as is stated in the colophon attached to the MS. of 'The Bruce' preserved at St. John's College, Cambridge, and so, as a pope's knight, had the courtesy title of 'Sir.' In three of the five existing MSS. of Ramsay his name is contracted into 'J. de R.' Mr. Brown argues that these initials are much more likely to stand for Johannes de Ross, the Latin equivalent of 'John of Ross,' or 'John the Ross Herald,' than for John de Ramsay, as Professor Skeat supposes. The transcriber of the Parliamentary Records was of course in the public service, and as the officers-at-arms headed by the Lyon were closely associated with Parliament, Mr. Brown thinks he may have been a herald.

Turning to 'The Wallace' itself, Mr. Brown carefully

¹ See *The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied* (Bonn, 1900).

² The Records of Parliament for 1468 were actually written in 1498 by Symon Fausyde. See Dr. Neilson's letter in *The Athenæum* of 17th November, 1900, p. 648.

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examined one book after another in order to ascertain whether the poem contained anything pointing to authorship in whole or in part by the chaplain. In the glorification of the Ramsay family which runs through the work he sees a fairly satisfactory proof that John Ramsay did more than copy a poetical romance by Blind Harry.¹ The knowledge of 'heraldic technicalities' displayed in 'The Wallace' seems to him also to favour the supposition that Ramsay was Harry's collaborator. But it is the acquaintance with little-known place-names in the part of Dumfriesshire where the Ramsays were a power that appears to him most surely to connect Ramsay with the poem as joint-author. He draws special attention to the fact of 'Crouchmaid,' a small hill around which the possessions of the Ramsays lay, being mentioned in the account of a disaster to the English given in Book 9. 'One wonders,' he says, 'if the occurrence of the obscure place-name is not best explained as a little familiar touch that reveals the hand of a Ramsay.'²

Mr. Brown's analysis of 'The Wallace' is of no small interest and value; but there are good reasons for not yielding assent to his hypothesis. Certainly the poem with its topographical details and marks of Chaucerian influence can no longer be regarded as the work of a man 'blind from his birth.' Apparently, however, the statement that Harry was *born* blind rests solely on the authority of John Major, who, writing long after the minstrel's death, may have blundered. If, as Mr. Brown seems to suppose, Harry was a mere strolling minstrel, afflicted with congenital blindness and incapable of furnishing more than the rough materials of 'The Wallace,' it is strange that Dunbar should have given him a place on the roll of famous poets. The mystery becomes the greater if we hold with Mr. Brown that 'J. de R.' was no other than Dunbar's friend John the Ross. But the

¹ Honour is done to other Dumfriesshire families in *The Wallace*—the Corries, Kirkpatrick's, Johnstones, etc.

² *The Wallace and The Bruce Restudied*, p. 71.

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conjecture that Ramsay was identical with John the Ross may be lightly dismissed, for, as a writer in one of the antiquarian magazines has shown, Ross Herald, when he died in 1490, left a widow, and therefore he was not a chaplain.¹ The argument here drawn from Dunbar's reference to Blind Harry would be disposed of if only a subordinate part in the composition of 'The Wallace' were assigned to Ramsay. Mr. Brown's hypothesis would then, however, be open to another and perhaps more serious objection, for the poem has not the marks of a composite work; but on the contrary seems to bear the strong impress of an individual mind.

The author of 'Schir William Wallace,' whoever he was, must have been exceptionally well acquainted with Dumfriesshire. Several castles in Nithsdale are mentioned, and it is clear that the poet knew exactly the relative geographical position and the peculiar features of each. There can be no doubt that the composer of the following lines was familiar with the different fortresses named:

'This spy he fled, till Dursder can pass;
Tauld that captane, that thai had hapnyt sa.
Ane other he gert in to the Enoch² ga;
In Tybris mur³ was warnyt off this cas;
And Louchmaban all semblyt to that place.'⁴

¹ *Scottish Antiquary*, Jan. 1901, p. 169.

² Enoch Castle (fragmentary only) is situated near Carronbridge Station.

³ Near Drumlanrig. There is a reference to 'Tybyr mur' in the same poem, book ix., line 1807.

A few jottings by Dr. Neilson on Tibbers Castle, the history of which is interesting and indeed relevant to the minstrel's narrative, will be valued:

'On 27th August, 1298, Sir Richard Siward (an adherent of Edward I.) was pressing for payment of arrears due to him by the English. "Know," said a friend of his, "that he has great need both for his house at Tibres which he has begun to build and for other things (. . . *pur sa mesone a Tibres quil comence a fere*) . . ."' Stevenson's *Historical Documents of Scotland*, ii. 306.

In 1300 Tibbers had a garrison of twenty-one men. Bain's *Calendar*, ii. 1141.

In 1302 there is record that Edward granted Siward £50 out of

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The passage in which the name Crouchmaid (Jamieson) or Crochtmaid (Moir) occurs has so many interesting references to the topography of Nithsdale that it may be quoted almost in full :

‘ Throw Dursder he tuk the gaynest¹ gayt ;²
 Rycht fayn he wald with Sotheroun mak debait.
 The playnest way abone Mortoun thai hald,
 Kepand the hycht, gyff that the Sotheroun wald
 Hous³ to persew, or turn to Lochmaban.
 Bot tent thar to the Inglismen tuk nan ;
 Doune Neth thai held, graith⁴ gydys⁵ can thaim leyr,⁶
 Abon Closbarn Wallace approchyt ner.
 In ire he grew, quhen thai war in his sycht ;
 To thaim thai sped with wyll and all thair mycht.
 On a out part the Scottis set in that tyd ;⁷
 Sewyn scor at erd thai had sone at a syd.
 The Sotheroun saw that it was hapnyt sa,
 Turnyt in agayn (sum) reskew for to ma.
 Quhen thai trowyt best agayn Scotland to stand,
 Erll Malcom com (than) rycht ner at thair hand.
 The hayll power tuk playn purpos to fle.
 Quha was at erd Wallace gert lat thaim be ;
 Apon the formest folowit in all his mycht.
 The erll and his apon the layff⁸ can lycht,

£100 formerly promised for the repair of his castle of ‘Tybres.’
 Bain’s *Calendar*, ii. 1307.

After Bruce slew Comyn, Tibbers was taken and held on his behalf, and John de Seton was hanged for capturing it from Siward in Bruce’s interest. Bain’s *Calendar*, ii. 1811.

In these entries will be seen the fitness of Blind Harry’s references to the castle as a place of account about the time of Wallace. In the poet’s own day it was merely a dismantled hillock, ‘the mote and castelsted of the Tybberis’ (1510) or the *montem nuncupatam le Mote de Tibris* (1489). Buccleuch MSS. in *Historical MSS. Commission*, pp. 14-19.

⁴ From Dr. Moir’s edition (Scottish Text Society), *Nynt Buik*, ines 1656-1660.

¹ shortest.

² way.

³ Hous, probably Ewes ; and Housdail (l. 1790), Ewesdale.

⁴ ready.

⁵ guides.

⁶ teach, guide.

⁷ time.

⁸ rest.

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Dyd all to ded wnhorssyt was that tyd.
Feyll men was slayn apon the Sotheroun sid.
V hundreth larg, or thai past Dawswyntoun,
On Sotheroun sid to ded was brocht adoun.
The Scottis hors mony began to tyr,
Suppos thaim selff was cruell fers as fyr.
The flearis¹ left bathe wode and watterys hail ;
To tak the playn thai thocht it most awaill.
In gret battaill away full fast thai raid ;
In to strenthtis thai thocht to mak na baid.²
Ner Louchmaban and Lochyrmos thai went,
Besyd Crochtmaid, quhar feyll Sotheroun was schent.³

Grouped with Blind Harry and one Sandy Traill in Dunbar's 'Lament for the Makaris' is Patrick Johnstoun, whose name is suggestive of Annandale origin. To that writer is generally ascribed, on the authority of the Bannatyne MS., 'The thré Deid Powis,' a poem in which the lessons to be derived from the emblems of mortality are enforced in a style that would have delighted the soul of the author of 'Night Thoughts' and won approval from the poet of 'The Grave':

'O Sinfull man ! into this mortall sé,
Quhilk is the vaill of mourning and of cair ;
With gaistly sicht, behold oure heidis thré,
Oure holkit eine, oure peilit powis bair.
As ye ar now, into this warld we wair,
Als fresche, als fair, als lusty to behald ;
Quhan thow lukis on this suth exemplair,
Off thy self, man, thou may be richt unbald,' etc.⁴

Owing to the want of historic sequence in the arrangement of the names in the 'Lament,' the era of Johnstoun is uncertain ; but it is considered highly probable that he formed one of that group of poets of which Robert Henryson, who died about 1498, was the most con-

¹ retreating persons.

² delay.

³ From the *Nynt Buik*, lines 1747 to 1778 (Dr. Moir's edition—Scottish Text Society).

⁴ *Ancient Scottish Poems*, published from the MS. of George Bannatyne (Hailes), 1770, p. 139.

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spicuous figure. Dr. David Laing has pointed out that in the 'Treasurer's Accounts' one Patrick Johnstoun is mentioned¹ as the recipient of several sums for performing plays before the Court early in the reign of James IV. ; but attention has not hitherto been called to the fact that, belonging to the same period and bearing the same name as the actor, there was an Annandale gentleman regarding whose career very little is known—the third son of Adam Johnstone of Johnstone and his wife, Janet Seton.² Though it is never wise to attach importance to mere identity of names, the present writer cannot help conjecturing that the Dumfriesshire gentleman, the gay young king's entertainer, and the moralist of 'The thré Deid Powis' were the same person.

Annandale has been named, though apparently in error, as the native district of Gawain Douglas, a much more famous 'makar' than Patrick Johnstoun. In Stephen Jones's *New Biographical Dictionary in Miniature* (1796), a carefully written and generally accurate work, it is stated without hesitation that Douglas was born in Annandale. But the authority followed is not named; and the authentic information which we have regarding the 'meek-eyed' Bishop of Dunkeld seems to make it improbable that he was a borderer. The house of Angus, to which he belonged, never was identified with the district as the greater Douglas family had been. Archibald Bell-the-Cat, the 'Ancient Angus' of 'Marmion' and father of the poet, was, it is true, appointed jointly with Lord Maxwell to rule Dumfriesshire during the minority of James IV. ; but that was about fourteen years after the birth of Gawain; and we have no reason

¹ Treasurer's Accounts, vol. i. pp. lxxvii, c, ccxxxix, 91, 118.

² Sir William Fraser thus refers to Adam Johnstone's third son: 'Patrick, who, in an Instrument of Sasine, dated 17th March, 1467, is styled brother of George, Lord Seton, and was therefore a son of this Adam Johnstone and his wife, Janet Seton. Nothing further has been ascertained regarding him, and he apparently died without issue.' *The Annandale Family Book*, vol. i. xvi.

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to suppose that the appointment was made owing to any previous connection with the county.

After the death of Sir David Lindsay, the last great poet of the early school, Latin verse, which had long been cultivated, came increasingly into vogue, for Scottish authors had become fully alive to the fact that by using as the vehicle of their thought a language familiar to educated men in all European countries they were able to address an audience incomparably superior to any that could be reached by them as writers in the vernacular. Of the numerous Scotsmen who in the latter part of the sixteenth century wrote Latin verses none attained a higher celebrity than James Crichton, the earliest poet who can without reasonable doubt be claimed for Dumfriesshire. He was born on 19th August, 1560, at Eliock,¹ of which his father (an eminent lawyer strongly attached to the cause of Mary) was the proprietor. In 1570 James Crichton entered St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews, where in 1575 he gained the degree of M.A. When scarcely seventeen he went to France, which had then unrivalled attraction for Scottish youths, and entered the army. The well-known story of his exploits as a disputant in the College of Navarre seems to rest on the unsatisfactory testimony of a seventeenth-century panegyrist, Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty. It is likely, however, that Crichton gave evidence of his scholarly attainments in Paris—indeed his subsequent career can more easily be explained if we hold that a reputation for learning was acquired by him in the French capital. In 1579 he proceeded to Genoa, and delivered before the senate of that city an address, which was afterwards published in pamphlet form. A year later he reached Venice, then a great literary centre. Perceiving the importance of securing the patronage of Aldus Manutius, grandson of the founder of the Aldine press and

¹Some writers affirm that Crichton was born at Cluny, in Perthshire, but his father was not presented with that estate before 1562.

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himself a man of wide reputation as publisher and author, Crichton addressed to him two poems remarkable for judicious flattery. Appreciating the homage rendered, Aldus introduced the young Scotsman to the best literary society of Venice, and sent out a handbill announcing the temporary retirement of his protégé in order to prepare for a great public discussion by working out 'two thousand conclusions in all arts.' The disputation took place in 1580; and that it ended in a triumph for Crichton is proved, not only by the express statement of Aldus, but indirectly by the circumstance that the bill was re-issued in 1581 and again in 1582, not anonymously as at first, but with the name of the Venetian printer adhibited to it.

In 1581 James Crichton went to Padua, and there also he distinguished himself. Recommended to the notice of the Duke of Mantua, he received a call to the service of that prince, and in February, 1582, he took up his residence in the city of Virgil. The Duke, who was a liberal patron of all who devoted themselves to literary pursuits, opened his heart to him at once. Nor could Crichton complain of any want of appreciation on the part of the city. He soon became the idol of the place—his personal beauty and extraordinary skill in every manly art winning for him the admiration of the young and the gay, while the erudition he displayed in scholastic disputations gained for him the applause of the aged and the learned. Unfortunately, however, he incurred the dislike of the Duke's son—Prince Vincenzo Gonzaga; and at the hands of that accomplished but reckless and vicious youth the poet met his death in an encounter which took place on 3rd July, 1582.¹

Though Crichton's extant pieces hardly bear out the high reputation which he enjoyed as a poet they have real

¹The mystery which long attached to Crichton's death was dispelled by the publication of some documents discovered in the *Archivio Gonzaga*. See Lily Eglantine Marshall's valuable 'Last Days of the Admirable Crichton,' in *Scots Lore* for May, 1895.

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merit, being imbued with fine poetical feeling. The longest of them is 'In Appulsu ad Urbem Venetam'—one of the compositions which on his arrival at Venice he presented to the powerful literary man whose friendship he had resolved to seek. Aldus was greedy of praise, and the panegyric upon him included in the poem, extravagant though it may seem to us, was not regarded by him as overdone. Though very unequal, 'In Appulsu' is sufficiently good as a whole to be worthy of the place it occupies in Dr. Arthur Johnston's *Delitie Poetarum Scotorum*. The most beautiful lines contained in it are descriptive of the disappearance of the Naiad who had addressed the poet :

'Et levibus vix æquora tinguere plantis
Visa, petit binis propius de cornibus unum,
Quo pater Eridanus violentibus influit undis
In mare purpureum, et vitreo caput abdidit amne.'¹

With graceful step, that scarcely skimm'd the deep
Of those twin streams, she sought the nearer horn
Through which the Po, with headlong rushing sweep,
To mingle with the mighty sea is borne.
There to her airy flight repose she gave,
And slowly sunk beneath the glassy wave.²

'In Appulsu' is excelled in sustained merit by two odes, the one addressed to Lorenzo Massa, secretary of the Venetian Republic, the other to Aldus's friend, Giovanni Donati. Both have been adversely criticised on the ground that they are 'full of false quantities'; but Crichton's biographer, Patrick Fraser Tytler, has no difficulty in showing that the trivial errors which have been discovered in them 'must, from their nature, and from the incorrect and inaccurate edition from which these poems are taken, be nothing else than typographical blunders.'³

¹ From the original edition (Venice, 1580), p. 6.

² Tytler's *Life of the Admirable Crichton*, edit. 1823, p. 52.

³ *Life of the Admirable Crichton*, edit. 1823, p. 265.

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The following is the ode to Massa :

AD LAURENTIUM MASSAM.

Ode.

(From the Aldine *Cicero*, book x., Venice, 1583, p. 199.
The ode was written in 1581.)

Errantem ab oris me Caledoniis
Postquam triremis per freta Nerei
Vexit, volentem mox remotos
Conspicere et populos et urbes,

Musæ per undas præcipites piæ
Vagum secutæ, numine candido
Sævis obarmatum periclis,
Incolumem sine labe servant.

Nati labores seu Dea Cypria
Secuta, longas per pelagi vias,
Hostile per ferrum, per ignes,
Perque minas comes ibat omnes.

Si forte Gades impiger ultimos,
Syrtesve, aut Indos visere barbaros
Vellem, nec Indos interve Syrtes
Destituent ope contumaces.

En obstrepentis qui Oceani freta
Mutavi amicæ fluctibus Hadriæ,
Latinus hospes, iam relictis
Diis patriis gelidoque cælo.

At non egenum Cœtus Aonius
Abjecit; adsunt mi faciles deæ,
Præstantque dulces una amicos,
Quos eadem pia cura jungit.

Te, Massa, clari gloria sanguinis,
Pars una summi, et maxima consili,
Ardensque virtus te nitentem,
Te decorant et opes beatum.

Musis amicus cum vigeas tamen,
Muis amico Critonio fave;
O digne Divarum favore,
Quique Deum faveas amicis.

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† A translation of the ode which appeared in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for August, 1819, is superior to most exercises of the kind :

TO LAURENTIUS MASSA.

When o'er the seas I hied me forth,
A wanderer from my native north,
A willing wanderer to view
Cities and people strange and new,

The muses, with maternal care,
Still followed through the paths of air,
And still with silver wings outspread
They guard from ill their favourite's head.

So when the toils of war were done,
The Cyprian goddess' darling son,
Through fiercest perils doomed to stray,
Found her companion of his way.

And if to India's burning sand,
Or Syrtes' Gulfs or Gades' strand
My path should lead,—on India's soil,
The goddess band should aid my toil !

No more the ocean's wrath to brave,
Near gentle Adria's milder wave
On Latian shores a welcome guest,
Far from my own loved north, I rest.

Nor here their kind attention ends,
The goddess band are still my friends,
And give me those to whom belong
Congenial cares, the sons of song.

But thee, my friend, the stainless flood
That warms thine heart, thy noble blood,
And fortune's smile, and virtue's blaze,
Adorn thee with collected rays.

Canst thou, the friend of every muse,
To me, their friend, thine aid refuse ?
Worthy thyself their love to share,
And making all they love thy care.

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An elegy on Cardinal Borromeo, who died in 1584, and some very poor epigrams, etc., issued in book form at Milan in March, 1585, have been ascribed by Mr. Sidney Lee and other writers to the Admirable Crichton on the ground that they bear to be works of James Crichton, a Scot. But now it is certain that the encounter with Vincenzo Gonzaga, on 3rd July, 1582, had, for the author of 'In Appulsu,' a fatal termination. His body was carefully examined by the Captain of Justice, who, in a letter to the secretary of the Duke of Mantua, described its appearance; and, after lying in an apothecary's house for two days, it was placed in a tarred coffin and quietly committed to the dust in the little church of San Simone.¹ From these facts we must conclude that the elegy on Borromeo, and the epigrams published at Milan in 1585, were written by a namesake and countryman of the illustrious Crichton.

The closing years of the sixteenth century witnessed no decline in the poetical activity of Scotland. Odes, epigrams, and elegies, in Latin, some of which would not have disgraced Buchanan himself, poured from the press; nor were meritorious poems in the vernacular wanting—for the pens of Alexander Montgomery and Alexander Hume were busy. But the imaginative literature of Scotland sank into insignificance in comparison with that which now appeared in England. The first three books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, published in 1590, were quickly followed by some of the finest of Shakespeare's comedies and historical plays; and before the first decade of the seventeenth century was ended England could boast of poetical treasures hardly inferior to even those of ancient Greece.

It is to one of the great English poets of the Elizabethan period that attention must now be directed. Ben Jonson, 'the most learned and judicious of the comedians' was, according to his own belief, of Dumfriesshire ancestry. He informed Drummond at Hawthornden

¹ *Scots Lore*, May, 1895.

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that 'his Grandfather came from Carlisle, and, he thought, from Anandale to it.'¹ Probably more definite information regarding the dramatist's connection with Dumfriesshire was contained in the account of his tour in Scotland, which, as he laments in the *Execration against Vulcan*, was, with many other works, destroyed by fire.²

It may be assumed that if Jonson's grandfather belonged to Annandale his name was Johnstone, not Johnson or Jonson. 'I believe,' says Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, 'there never was a Johnson heard of in Annandale or in its vicinity.'³ But in England the Scottish Johnstone would naturally soon be changed into the softer and more familiar 'Johnson' or 'Jonson'; indeed a Scotsman resident in Cumberland at a time when a bitter feud prevailed along the Borders, might be glad to have his patronymic anglicised with the least possible delay.

In connection with the question whether the old Laureate was really of Border blood, the evidence of heraldry is highly important. Drummond in his invaluable *Notes* states that the dramatist's coat-of-arms was of 'three spindles or rhombi.'⁴ This indication led Mr. John Addington Symonds to enter upon an investigation, as a result of which he was able to show that 'Jonson had retained the specific bearing of his Annandale forbears, namely, three cushions, depicted lozenge-wise, in which shape they assume the semblance of the heraldic fusil, spindle, or rhombus.'⁵

¹ *Extracts from the Hawthornden Manuscripts: and Notes by William Drummond, of Conversations with Ben Jonson*, Edin. 1831-2, p. 90.

² "(among

The rest) my journey into Scotland Sung,
With all the adventures."

Ben: Jonson's Execration against Vulcan, Lond. 1640, b. 3.

³ *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations*, Laing's edit. 1842, p. 18.

⁴ *Extracts from the Hawthornden Manuscripts: and Notes*, etc. (1831-2), p. 101.

⁵ *Ben Jonson*, by J. A. Symonds (1886), p. 2.

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Among the young poets who went to London in the time of James I., hoping to win fame almost equal to that of Ben Jonson, was Lodowick Carlell, a son of Herbert Carlell of Brydekirk, near Annan.¹ Gaining a position at Court, Carlell soon managed to secure for his literary efforts the favourable attention of the wits of the metropolis. *The Deserving Favourite*, his first drama, appeared in 1629, and ten years later 'this faire Courtly Piece,' as the printers styled it, was followed by *Arviragus and Philicia* (two parts), for which Dryden wrote a new prologue on the occasion of its revival by the King's actors as late as 1672. In the days of the Protector, Carlell published *The Passionate Lover: a Tragi-Comedy* (1655), and also, in one volume, *The Fool would be a Favourite, or the Discreet Lover*, and *Osmond the Great Turk, or the Noble Servant* (1657). It would appear from a reference in *The Passionate Lover* that even when Puritanism was dominant in England, life had for the poet an abundant zest:

'Most here know
This Author hunts, and hawks, and feeds his Deer,²
Not some, but most fair days throughout the yeer.'

In 1664 Lodowick Carlell printed *Heraclius, Emperor of the East*, a work translated from the French of Corneille, which seemed likely to have a special attraction for Charles II., the subject being 'the restoration of a gallant Prince to his just inheritance, many years after the unjust and horrid murder of a Saint-like Father, and this by the courage and prudence of one who seem'd

¹ Nicholas Carlisle's *Collections for a History of the Ancient Family of Carlisle*, Lond. 1822, p. 181. See also Mr. Charles H. Gray's *Lodowick Carliell: his Life, a Discussion of his Plays, and The Deserving Favourite*, Chicago, 1905, pp. 12-14, where the identity of the playwright with Herbert Carlell of Brydekirk's son Lodowick is finally established.

² Carlell was long keeper of the Deer Park at Richmond.

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to the vulgar eye to go another way.’¹ The play is readable ; but, as Carlell modestly remarks :

‘Those who Translate hope but a Labourer’s Praise,
’Tis such as can Invent deserve the Bays.’

The tragedy called *Heraclius* which afforded that eminent judge of plays, Mr. Samuel Pepys, much greater satisfaction than *Othello* was probably a different translation, for in the ‘Advertisement’ to his work Carlell says, ‘Another Translation formerly design’d (after this seem’d to be accepted of) was perfected and acted, this not returned to me until the very day.’

Carlell long held, among other positions, the place of Groom of the Privy Chamber. When he retired from Court he was granted by Charles II. a pension of two hundred pounds a year ; but it was not regularly paid, and at his death in 1675 the arrears amounted to one thousand four hundred pounds. In consequence of the king’s disregard of his obligation, the old courtier died in debt to the extent of several hundred pounds.²

After the death of Carlell his fame rapidly grew dim. His tragedies were voted dull and heavy, and were driven from the stage by the witty and daringly immoral comedies of Congreve and Wycherley. Only twelve years after his body was laid in the grave, William Winstanley, regarding him as little better than one John Milton, ‘whose Fame was gone out like a Candle in a Snuff,’ referred to him as the writer of ‘some not yet totally forgotten Plays.’³

The name of Lodowick Carlell should not be allowed to pass into oblivion. He shows a deplorable ignorance

¹ *Heraclius*—Author’s Advertisement. Carlell proceeds to compare Monk to a ‘Geer-falcon, who though she seems not to eye the Hern, but works a contrary way, ’tis but to be in the wind.’

² Will of Lodowick Carlell, proved 25 Sept., 1675, and Will of Jean Carlell, his widow, proved 17 Aug., 1681. See abstracts in *Collections for a History of the Ancient Family of Carlisle*, p. 185.

³ *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*, 1687, p. 114.

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of the laws of versification, but his plots are fairly well constructed, and in dialogue he occasionally displays a pretty wit. In one respect he deserves no stinted praise—his plays are unmarked by that licentiousness which characterises most of the dramatic writings of his period. Even Jeremy Collier might have scanned his pages without finding anything very objectionable from a moral standpoint. The prologue to *The Deserving Favourite* and the epilogue to the first part of *Arviragus and Philicia* may serve as examples of his weak verse.

PROLOGUE

to *The Deserving Favourite*.

(From the original edition of the play, London, 1629. A second edition appeared in 1659, and in 1905 the work was reprinted at Chicago.)

Doe not expect strong Lines, nor Mirth, though they
Justly the Towne-wits, and the Vulgar sway :
What hope have we then that our Play can please
This more Judicious Presence, wanting these ?
We have a hope (the Author sayes) this Night
Love in our weaknesse shall expresse his might.
He in each Noble brest himselfe will place ;
The Subject being all Love then, must finde grace :
Yes you may say, if it bee well exprest,
Else love doth censure him from out our brest :
Thus what he hop'd should helpe him, if he erre
In the expression, turnes his Censurer.
I for the Author stand, and in his Name
Doe here renounce the glory or the shame
Of this Night's worke : Great Love, this Play is thine,
Worke Miracles, and shew thy selfe Divine ;
Change these rude lines into a sweet smoothe Straine,
Which were the weake effects of a dull Braine :
If in this Prologue Contradictions move,
That best expresses : it was writ by Love.

EPILOGUE

to *Arviragus and Philicia* (1639), Part I.

Our Author at the Barre of Censure stands,
Yet fears no hisse, nor hopes no clap of hands ;

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The gentler Sex, that gives life to his muse,
Such rude dislikes, or plaudets never use ;
But with a pleas'd, or discontented eye,
Can make a Poem live, or Poet dye.
If these, and who are theirs, in part approve
This our first Play, the second then may move
A better liking: for the persons known,
Their griefes, or joyes oft move us, as our own.
The Author found it so, for having red
Thus farre the story, and a few tears shed
With sad Philicia, long'd to know the rest,
Hoping that vertuous lovers must be blest.
Now if like passion be stir'd up in you,
He has writ well, so have we acted too.

In 1658, the year of Cromwell's death, a dramatic work in verse, entitled *Bellum Grammaticale*, was published by Christopher Irving, M.D., best known as the author of *Historiæ Scoticæ Nomenclatura Latino-Vernacula*.

Dr. Irving was the eldest son of Christopher Irving, of the Annandale family of Irving of Bonshaw, who in 1613 purchased an estate in the Barony of Lurg, County Fermanagh, and by 1630 was resident in Ireland.¹ A devoted adherent of Episcopacy, the poet refused to subscribe the National Covenant, and, in consequence of his recusancy, was in 1639 expelled from the College of Edinburgh, and banished from the country. On his return to Scotland, after wandering for some time on the Continent, he was arrested and thrown into prison, where the 'Cruel Saints' were pleased to 'mortifie him seventeen nights with bread and water.'² Having lost a plentiful patrimony through the troubles which had arisen in his father's adopted country, he found it necessary, on his release, to ward off starvation by teaching grammar, and he was schoolmaster first at Leith

¹ See Col. Irving of Bonshaw's *The Book of the Irvings*, Aberdeen, 1907, pp. 135-6.

² Address to the Reader in *Historiæ Scoticæ Nomenclatura Latino-Vernacula*.

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and afterwards at Preston. In 1653 Irving, who had been 'bred liberally in these arts and places that fit men for the practice of physick and chirurgery,' gained the appointment of surgeon to the forces under the command of Monk. After the Restoration he became a burgesse of Edinburgh, where he practised as a physician till his death in 1693.

Irving's first publication was *Medicina Magnetica* (1656), a curious work on the art of healing by sympathy, dedicated to Monk. In 1664 he sent to the printers some notes on the Latin proper names used by Scottish historians, and these notes formed the basis of *Historiæ Scoticæ Nomenclatura Latino-Vernacula*, published in Edinburgh in 1682 and twice reprinted. Of more interest to Dumfriesshire readers is *The Original of the Family of Irvines or Erinvines*, a sketch dated 1678. *Bellum Grammaticale*, which is a tragi-comedy in five acts, narrating a war of the nouns and the verbs, appears to have been Irving's only published work in verse. An extract from the piece is here given, with a translation by Mr. William Duncan, B.A.

PROLOGUS.

Hoc agite, si vultis, Spectatores benevoli,
Quos solos adesse speramus, et cupimus: Tragico-comœdiam
Vobis dabimus, nobis si aures et oculos dare est otium;
Non quæ lachrymas exprimat, sed risum moveat:
Nam belli funesti et luctuosi sim licet nuncius,
Quo florentissimam Grammaticæ provinciam miserè
Vexarunt Poëta et Amo seditiosi Principes;
Non sine lamentabili strage fortissimorum et Nominum et Verborum.
Plus tamen delectationis faciet et lætitiæ;
Quàm doloris, et luctûs: quòd spectatores, non actores eritis
In tam tristi certamine. Quòd si vobis ridiculi
Videbimur; quòd rem in scenam producimus ridiculam;
Decorum nos observâsse existimabitis, ut in fabulis decet,
Materiam qui sumpserimus nostris convenientem viribus.
Date operam, adeste æquo animo per silentium,
Ut pernoscatis belli tam atrocis principium, et exitum.

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PROLOGUE.

Be good enough to give us attention, kindly spectators, whom alone we wish and desire to be present. We shall present to you a tragi-comedy if you have leisure to listen and look—not one to draw forth tears, but to excite laughter. For it is given me to herald a fatal and grievous war, whereby the seditious nobles Poeta and Amo¹ have miserably devastated the fair and fertile province of Grammar, not without a lamentable carnage of Nouns and Verbs. Yet shall it be productive rather of delight and pleasure, than of grief and pain, because you shall be spectators not actors in so sad a struggle.

But if we shall seem ridiculous in your eyes, because we are producing a ridiculous story on the stage, you will admit that, having undertaken a subject suitable to our powers, we have, as befits stage-plays, kept within the bounds of decency. Give heed, and with impartial mind and in silence await, that you may fully know the origin and the issue of a war so grim.

¹In the list of *Dramatis Personæ (Actorum Nomina)* Poeta is Rex Nominum, Prince of Nouns, and Amo is Rex Verborum, Prince of Verbs.

II

OLD HISTORICAL BALLADS

THE early poems which can without doubt be assigned to Dumfriesshire authors, whose names survive, are not nearly so fine as the ancient anonymous ballads of the district. If Ben Jonson had lived in Annandale, the home of his ancestors, he would have known that popular verse, when the outcome of a romantic life, often exhibits extraordinary freshness and force, and would never have declared that 'A Poet should detest a Ballet maker.'¹

In the sixteenth century the Scottish Borderers had a marked taste for music, and for ballad poetry commemorative of exploits by soldiers or thieves of their race. Testimony to this fact is borne by Lesley, who says: 'Placent admodum sibi sua Musica, et Rhythmicis suis cantionibus, quas de majorum suorum gestis, aut ingeniosis predandi, precandive stratagematibus ipsi confingunt.'² (They take especial delight in their own music, and in rhythmically-chanted verses of their own composition about the military achievements of ancestors and ingenious schemes of plundering or cajolery.) Doubtless the noted freebooter John Armstrong of Gilnockie Tower, near Langholm, was one of the heroes of the lays chanted on the Border in Lesley's time; and it may be that the Dumfriesshire ballad of 'Johnie Armstrang' is in the main a sixteenth century production.

¹ *Extracts from the Hawthornden Manuscripts*, p. 99.

² *De Origine, Moribus, et Rebus Gestis Scotorum*, edit. 1578, p. 60.

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Determined to make the law as much respected in Roxburghshire and Dumfriesshire as it was in Fife and the Lothians, James V. in 1530 traversed the Border. Near Caerlanrig he was met by Gilnockie, who, as Burton remarks, 'seems to have considered himself more in the position of an ally than a subject of the King of Scots.'¹ The bold reiver and the splendidly-equipped horsemen who followed him were seized, and condemned to be hanged. According to Lindsay of Pitscottie, Armstrong, hoping to save his life, offered to maintain forty gentlemen ever ready to serve the king, and also to bring any subject of England to his Majesty within a certain day either quick or dead. At length, seeing no prospect of pardon, 'he said verrie proudlie, "I am bot ane fooll to seik grace at ane graceles face. Bot had I knawin, Sir, that yea would have takin my lyff this day, I sould have leved vpon the borderis in disphyte of king Harie and yow baith; for I knaw king Harie wold down weigh my best hors with gold to knaw that I war condemned to die this day.'"'²

Armstrong was evidently led to death with indecent haste. Burton falls into error in the following sentences on the execution: 'The entry in the record of the form of trial to which they (the Armstrongs) were subjected is briefly, "John Armstrong, *alias* Blak Jok, and Thomas his brother, convicted of common theft and reset of theft—hanged.'"'³ Gilnockie was not tried at all, and Blak Jok was a much less renowned thief. The hero of the ballad suffered early in June, 1530; the other John Armstrong in April, 1531. If Dr. Burton had read with sufficient care Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, to which he refers, he could not have confounded the two Armstrongs, as the editor points out that the persons whose names occur in the memorandum dated '1st April,'

¹ *History of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 326.

² *The Chronicles of Scotland*, edit. Dalrymple, vol. ii. p. 343.

³ *History of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 328.

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preserved in the Justiciary Records, must have been convicted after Gilnockie's death.¹

There are two English versions of the ancient poem on the execution of Armstrong—'A Northern Ballet,' which Professor Child pronounces to be 'one of the best ballads in English,'² and a black-letter broadside entitled 'Johnny Armstrong's Last Good-Night.' Both forms represent the chief as an Englishman subject to the jurisdiction of the Scottish king, and make him die sword in hand. In 'A Northern Ballet' and also in the earlier copies of the 'Last Good-Night,' Armstrong is described as a 'man in Westmerland.' Cumberland, however, is named as his county in a copy of the broadside which, though late, may give an early reading:

'Yes, there is a man in Cumberland,
And Johnny Armstrong they do him call;
He has no lands nor rents coming in,
Yet he keeps eightscore men within his hall.'³

'Johnie Armstrang,' the only Scottish version, was published by Allan Ramsay in *The Ever Green*, with a note saying that it was 'copied from a Gentleman's Mouth of the Name of Armstrang, who is the 6th Generation from this John.' It accords more closely than either of the English versions with Pitscottie's narrative—indeed the agreement with that record is so remarkable as to require some special explanation. Was 'Johnie Armstrang' derived from Lindsay's *Chronicles of Scotland*, as another Dumfriesshire ballad—'Gude Wallace'—was evidently derived from Blind Harry's 'Wallace,' or did it

¹ Pitcairn's *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, vol. i. part i. p. 154*.

² *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. iii. p. 520.

³ Hutchinson's *History of the County of Cumberland*, Carlisle, 1794, vol. i. p. 278. The editor of that work, after giving the ballad in full, remarks: 'It is evident, from the whole tenor of this ballad, that Gilt-knock-Hall, though under the jurisdiction of the Scottish King, was then considered as a part of our county, and of course Armstrong was deemed a Cumberland man.'

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in some early form supply the historian with materials for his narrative? The history, though completed before 1600, remained in MS. till 1728—four years after the appearance of *The Ever Green*—and consequently was not, like ‘The Wallace,’ easily accessible to ballad-makers in the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century. Then, on the supposition that ‘Johnie Armstrang’ is but a metrical version of a passage in the *Chronicles*, it is difficult to account for the omission by the poet of Armstrong’s striking offer to bring, alive or dead, any subject of England to his royal master. On the whole, the hypothesis that a Border ballad, now represented by ‘Johnie Armstrang,’ underlies Pitscottie’s narrative, seems to be more worthy of our favour than the alternative hypothesis. There is some reason to believe that Lindsay of Pitscottie, like Hume of Godscroft, recognised the value of popular poetry to the historian; and certainly his description of the reiver’s interview with James has the characteristics that we should expect to find in an account largely based upon a spirited ballad.¹

The following is the Ramsay poem, reproduced from *The Ever Green*, vol. ii. pp. 190-196:

JOHNIE ARMSTRANG.

Sum speiks of Lords, sum speiks of Lairds,
And siclyke Men of hie Degrie;
Of a Gentleman I sing a Sang,
Sumtyme calld Laird of *Gilnockie*.
The King he wrytes a luving Letter
With his ain Hand sac tenderly,
And he hath sent it to *Johny Armstrang*,
To cum and speik with him speidily.
The *Eliots* and *Armstrangs* did convene;
They were a gallant Company,
Weill ryde and meit our lawful King,
And bring him safe to *Gilnockie*.

¹For an interesting discussion of the whole question see Mr. T. F. Henderson’s edition of the *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. i. pp. 346-9.

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Make Kinnen¹ and Capon ready then,
And Venison in great Plenty ;
Weill welcome Hame our Royal King,
I hope heill dyne at *Gilnockie*.

They ran their Horse on the *Langum Houn*,
And brake their Speirs with mekle main ;
The Ladys lukit frae their loft Windows,
God bring our Men weil back again.
Quhen *Johny* came before the King,
With all his Men sae brave to see,
The King he movit his Bonnet to him,
He weind he was a King as well as He.

May I find Grace, my Sovereign Liege,
Grace for my loyal Men and me ;
For my Name it is *Johny Armstrang*,
And Subject of zours, my Liege, said he.
Away, away, thou Traytor Strang,
Out of my Sicht thou mayst sune be,
I grantit nevir a Traytors Lyfe,
*And now I'll not begin with thee.*²

Grant me my Lyfe, my Liege, my King,
And a bony Gift I will give to thee,
Full Four and Twenty Milkwhyt Steids,
Were a' foald in a Zeir to me.
I'll gie thee all these Milk whyt Steids,
That prance and nicher at a Speir,
With as mekle gude *Inglis Gilt*,³
As four of their braid Backs dow beir.
Away, away, thou Traytor, etc.

Grant me my Lyfe, my Liege, my King,
And a bony Gift I'll gie to thee,
Gude Four and twenty ganging Mills,
That gang throw a' the Zeir to me.

¹ Kinnen—rabbits.

² Armstrong was accused of treason as well as of theft (see *De Origine, Moribus, et Rebus Gestis Scotorum*, lib. ix.).

³ Gilt—gold, money.

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These Four and twenty Mills complete,
Sall gang for thee throw all the Zeir,
And as mekle of gude reid Quheit,
As all thair Happers dow to bear.

Away, away, thou Traytor, etc.

Grant me my Lyfe, my Liege, my King,
And a great Gift I'll gie to thee,
Bauld Four and Twenty Sisters Sons,
Sall for thee fecht tho all sould flee.

Away, away, thou Traytor, etc.

Grant me my Lyfe, my Liege, my King,
And a brave Gift I'll gie to thee ;
All betwene heir and *Newcastle* Town,
Sall pay thair zeirly Rent to thee.

Away, away, thou Traytor, etc.

Ze leid, ze leid now, King, he says,
Althocht a King and Prince ze be ;
For I luid naithing in all my Lyfe,
I dare well sayit but Honesty :
But a fat Horse and a fair Woman,
Twa bony Dogs to kill a Deir ;
But *England* suld haif found me Meil and Malt,
Gif I had livd this hundred Zeir.

Scho suld haif found me Meil and Malt,
And Beif and Mutton in all Plentie ;
But neir a *Scots* Wyfe could haif said,
That eir I skaithd her a pure Flie.
To seik het Water beneath cauld Yce,
Surely it is a great Folie ;
I haif asked Grace at a graceless Face,
But there is nane for my Men and me.¹

¹ It was the custom to grant life to every condemned man who 'asked grace' in the King's presence, a fact illustrated by a passage in *Galfridus le Baker of Swinbroke*, to which the attention of the writer has been called by Dr. Neilson. In 1346 David II., invading England, captured the Peel of Liddel, the captain of which was Walter Selby, whom King David, for reasons not very clear, commanded to be hanged. On hearing of this order Selby asked to see the King, and the desired permission was granted. David rejected the plea of his prisoner, whereupon

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But had I kend or I came frae Hame,
 How thou unkynd wadst bene to me,
 I wad haif kept the Border Syde,
 In spyte of all thy Force and thee.
 Wist *Englands* King that I was tane,
 O gin a blyth Man wald he be ;
 For anes I slew his Sisters Son,
 And on his Breist-bane brak a Tree.

John wore a Girdle about his Midle,
 Imbroiderd owre with burning Gold,
 Bespangled with the same Mettle,
 Maist beautifull was to behold.
 Ther hang nine Targats¹ at *Johnys* Hat,
 And ilk an worth Three hundred Pound,
What wants that Knave that a King suld haif,
But the Sword of Honour and the Crown.

O quhair gat thou these Targats, Johnie,
That blink sae brawly abune thy Brie?
 I gat them in the Field fechtin,
 Quher, cruel King, thou durst not be.
 Had I my Horse and my Harness gude,
 And Ryding as I wont to be,
 It sould haif bene tald this hundred Zeir,
 The Meiting of my King and me.

the latter protested 'against the cruel mandate of the tyrant, that by the ancient law of royal grace of the Realms alike of Scotland, England, and France, any wretch, although guilty of treason, should enjoy the privilege of immunity (sanctuary) so soon as he stood within the sight of the King, and that it never happened that any man should undergo the last penalty after supplicating the grace of the King's face in his presence.' (*Galfridus*, edit. Giles, pp. 170-1.)

Notwithstanding his protest Selby was handed over to the executioner. That the practice of extending pardon to men who sought it of a King personally was universal may also be proved by some lines in 'Piers the Plowman':

'Hit is nat vsed on erthe · to hongre eny felones
 Ofter than ones · thauh thei weren treitours.
 And yf the kyng of the kyngdom · come in the tyme
 Ther a theof tholy sholde · deth other Iuwise,
 Lawe wolde he geve hym lyf · and he lokede on hym.'

Edit. Skeat, Text C, Passus, xxi.

¹ Targats—tassels.

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God be withee, *Kirsty*, my Brither,
Lang live thou Laird of *Mangertoun* ;
Lang mayst thou dwell on the Border Syde,
Or thou se thy Brither ryde up and down.
And GOD be withee, *Kirsty*, my Son,
Quhair thou sits on thy Nurses Knee ;
But and thou live this Hundred Zeir,
Thy Fathers better thoul't never be.

Farweil, my bonny *Gilnockhall*,
Quhair on *Esk* syde thou standest stout,
Gif I had lived but seven Zeirs mair,
I wald haif gilt thee round about.
John murdred was at *Carlinrigg*,
And all his galant Companie ;
But *Scotland's* Heart was never sae wae,
To see sae mony brave Men die.

Because they savd their Country deir
Frae *Englishmen* ; nane were sae bauld,
Quhyle *Johnie* livd on the Border-syde,
Nane of them durst cum neir his Hald.

Johnie Armstrong's renown was almost equalled by that of 'Kinmont Willie,' an Eskdale freebooter of the time of James VI. Satchells declares that Kinmont 'from Giltknocky sprang';¹ but there does not appear to be any evidence in support of his statement, and, as concerns lineage, he may have confounded 'Kinmont Will' with 'Christie's Will,' a thief of note who occupied Gilnockie Tower in the reign of Charles I., and was certainly a descendant of the chief who fell into the merciless hands of James V.² Kinmont was a son of Alexander Armstrong, described in a 'Pedigree of the Grames of Esk,' prepared for Lord Burghley, as 'a pensioner to King Henry VIII.'³—not of Kirsty Armstrong, who,

¹ *A True History of Several Honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot*, edit. 1786, p. 12.

² For the pedigree of Christie's Will see Scott's Supplement to 'Johnie Armstrong.'

³ See *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. p. 826.

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as may be inferred from the closing verses of the ballad on the execution at Caerlanrig, was Gilnockie's only son.

To the officers of Queen Elizabeth William Armstrong proved exceedingly troublesome. In a memorandum by the English Warden of the West Marches, dated July, 1583, he is named as one of the principal offenders in 'Annersdale,'¹ and in a report on 'The Severall Surnames of the borderers of Scotland and their dwellings,' prepared by Edward Aglionby in 1592, it is stated that a hundred Armstrongs dwelt with him.² His forays spread desolation far and wide. In 1584 he made a raid into Tynedale and 'took away forty score kye and oxen, three score horses and meares, 500 sheep, burned 60 houses, and spoiled the same to the value of 2000/ sterling and slew 10 men.'³

Favoured by Buccleuch, the Keeper of Liddesdale, Armstrong was long able to defy his English foes, the deadliest of whom was Lord Scrope, the Warden of the West Marches. At length, in 1596, whilst returning with three or four in his company from a meeting with Salkeld, Lord Scrope's deputy, and Robert Scott of Haining, the deputy of Buccleuch, held on a day of truce, at Kershope, he was seized and taken to Carlisle. The Scottish Warden wrote to Salkeld and afterwards to Scrope, pointing out that the capture was a violation of Border law, and demanding the release of the prisoner. Receiving no satisfactory reply, he prepared to rescue his retainer. Riding from Teviotdale, Buccleuch and his men rested and were equipped among the Grahams, who, though by law Englishmen, were friendly to Kinmont Willie;⁴ and afterwards, on a dark and stormy night, they proceeded to Carlisle to make their 'proude attempte.' In a letter to Lord Burghley

¹ *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. i. p. 105.

² *Ib.* vol. i. p. 394.

³ *Ib.* vol. i. p. 314.

⁴ Kinmoat's wife was the daughter of Base Hutchen, a Graham of Esk. (See 'Pedigree of the Grames of Esk' in *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. Appendix ii.)

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dated 14th April, 1596, Scrope gives his version of how the matter fell out :

‘ Yesternighte, in the dead tyme therof, Water Scott of Hardinge (the cheife man with Buclughe) accompanied with 500 horsmen of Buclughes and Kinmontes frendes, did come armed and appointed with gavlockes and crowes of iron, hand peckes, axes and skailinge lathers, unto an outewarde corner of the base courte of this castell, and to the posterne dore of the same, which they undermynded speedily and quietly, and made them selves possessores of the base courte, brake into the chamber wher Will of Kinmont was, caried him awaye, and in their discoverie lefte for deade two of the watchmen and hurte a servante of myne, one of Kinmontes kepers, and were issued againe oute of the posterne before they were descried by the watch of th’inerwarde, and er resistance coulde be made. The watch as yt shoulde seeme, by reason of the stormie night, were either on sleepe, or gotten under some covert to defende them selves from the violence of the wether, by which meanes the Scot atcheived th’interprise with less difficultie. The wardinge place of Kinmont (in respect of the manner of his takinge, and the assurance he had geven that he woulde not breake awaye), I supposed to have bin of sufficient saltie, and litle looked that any durst have attempted to enforce any of her Majestys castelles, and a peece of so good strengthe. If Buclugh himselfe have bin heare in person, the capten of this proude attempte, as some of my servantes tell me they harde his name called uppon (the truth whereof I shall with certenty advertise by my nexte), then I humbly beseech that her Majesty wilbe pleased to sende unto the Kinge to call for and press his deliverie, that he maye receive punishment.

‘ . . . And regardinge the myndes of the Lowthers to do villeny unto me, havinge bin assured by some of their owne, that they would do what they coulde to disquiet my governement, I am induced vehementlye

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to suspect that their heades have bin in the devise of this attempt, and am also perswaded that Thomas Carlton hath lent his hand heareunto; for yt is whispered in myne eare that some of his servauntes, well acquainted with all the corners of this castell, were guydes in the execution hearof.

‘Postscript . . . it appeareth that Buclughs being at the fact is not to be doubted. Besydes the executioners, I am informed that the Lairde of Johnston laye with an ambushment in one place and the Goodman of Bonshawe with an other, on the paile of Scotland, to have given defence to there owne and resisted the pursuers, if any had followed so farre.

‘. . . The informer sayeth that Buclugh was the fift man which entred the castell, and encouraged his companie with these wordes “Stand to yt, for I have vowed to God and my prince, that I would fetch oute of England Kynmont dead or quicke, and will maintaine that accion when it is donn with fyre and sworde against all the resisters.”’¹

Scrope’s suspicions that treachery was at work were afterwards confirmed. On 2nd May, 1596, he reported to the Council that two witnesses examined by himself and other justices ‘concerninge the breckeinge of Carlisle Castle had sworn that one Thomas Carlton, Launcelatt Carlton and Richie of Breckenhill with others, did agree and sett doune the plott how the castell shoulde be brocken, and that Thomas Carlton did undertake to make the watchmenn of the saide castell shewre.’² Thomas Carlton had allies in the Grahams, whose active assistance was thus acknowledged by Buccleuch himself in a letter ‘to a great man in Scotland’ which fell into the hands of Scrope in 1597: ‘I could nought have done that matter without great frindship of the Grames of Eske.’³

¹ *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 121-3.

² *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. p. 129.

³ *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. p. 367. The Grahams were long regarded as lawless by the justices of the West March. (See *The Victoria History of Cumberland*, vol. ii. p. 281.)

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Buccleuch's feat is commemorated in 'Kinmont Willie,' a ballad in comparison with which the most spirited of the lays of Macaulay and Aytoun are tame, and also in Captain Walter Scott of Satchells's *A True History of Several Honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot*, published in 1688. The two poetical accounts of the rescue—both inaccurate, as tested by the English warden's report—agree curiously in some details, and are evidently not independent. The balance of probability seems to be in favour of the originality of 'Kinmont Willie.' Captain Walter Scott's *True History* was certainly 'gathered out' of the ballads current in his day, as well as out of formal histories,¹ and his account of the assault on the Castle reads like a narrative largely due to suggestions from some popular lay. Mr. Andrew Lang has no doubt that Satchells 'decanted' the ballad represented by 'Kinmont Willie' into his own 'metreless and mainly rhymeless stuff.'²

Regarding the history of the ballad we have little information. Sir Walter Scott, by whom the piece was first printed, says, 'It is preserved, by tradition, on the West Borders, but much mangled by reciters; so that some conjectural emendations have been absolutely necessary to render it intelligible. In particular, the "Eden" has been substituted for the Eske, the latter name being inconsistent with geography.'³ As the original MS. of 'Kinmont Willie,' unlike that of 'Jamie Telfer,' has not been discovered, we have no means of learning the exact nature and extent of the alterations made on the poem by Scott. But probably he handled his materials very freely; and his inadequate praise of stanzas rarely equalled for vigour and buoyancy, as 'rude strains,' can readily be accounted for by the supposition that he had in view the piece as taken down

¹ Satchells quotes literally 'The Raid of the Reidswire.'

² 'Border History versus Border Ballads' in *The Cornhill Magazine*, January 1907.

³ *Ministrelsy of the Scottish Border*: Introduction to the ballad.

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from the mouth of a reciter. Professor Child says, 'One would like to see stanzas 10-12 and 31 in their mangled condition.' The present writer would conjecture that the animated concluding verse was written by Scott, and had its origin in four lines contained in the Glenriddell MS. version of 'Archie o' Cafeld,' but not given in the *Minstrelsy* copy of that ballad :

'Surely thy minnie has been some witch,
Or thy dad some warlock has been,
Else thow had never attempted such
Or to the bottom thow had gone.'

KINMONT WILLIE.

(From *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Kelso, 1802, vol. i. pp. 126-35.)

O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde ?
O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroop ?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee¹ to hang him up ?

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his companie.

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back,
They guarded him fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.²

They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
And also thro' the Carlisle sands,
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

—'My hands are tied, but my tongue is free !
And whae will dare this deed avow ?
Or answer by the border law,
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch ?'—

¹ Hairibee—Haribee, the place of execution at Carlisle.

² Liddel-rack—a ford on the Liddel.

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—‘Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!

There's never a Scot shall set ye free:

Before ye cross my castle yate,

I trow ye shall take farewell o' me.'—

—‘Fear na ye that, my Lord,' quo' Willie:

‘By the faith o' my bodie, Lord Scoop,' he said,

‘I never yet lodged in a hostelrie

But I paid my lawing before I gaed.'—

Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,

In Branksome Ha' where that he lay,

That Lord Scoope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,

Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,

He garr'd the red wine spring on hie—

—‘Now Christ's curse on my head,' he said,

‘But aveng'd of Lord Scoop I'll be!

‘O is my basnet¹ a widow's curch?²

Or my lance a wand of the willow tree?

Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand,

That an English Lord should lightly³ me!

‘And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,

Against the truce of border tide?

And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch

Is Keeper here on the Scottish side?

‘And have they e'en ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,

Withouten either dread or fear?

And forgotten that the bauld Bacleuch

Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

‘O were there war between the lands,

As well I wot that there is none,

I would slight Carlisle Castell high,

Tho' it were builded of marble stone.

‘I would set that castell in a low,

And sloken it with English blood!

There's never a man in Cumberland

Should ken where Carlisle Castell stood.

¹ basnet—helmet.

² curch—coif.

³ lightly—set light by.

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‘But since nae war’s between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be ;
I’ll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be !’

He has call’d him forty Marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, call’d
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has call’d him forty Marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch,
With spur on heel and splent on spauld,¹
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.

There were five and five, before them a’,
Wi’ hunting horns and bugles bright ;
And five and five came wi’ Buccleuch,
Like Warden’s men arrayed for fight ;

And five and five, like a mason gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie ;
And five and five, like broken men ;
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.

And as we cross’d the bateable land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o’ men that we met wi’,
Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde ?

—‘Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen ?’
Quo’ fause Sakelde, ‘Come tell to me !’—
—‘We go to hunt an English stag
Has trespassed on the Scots countrie.’—

—‘Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men ?’
Quo’ fause Sakelde, ‘Come tell me true !’—
—‘We go to catch a rank reiver
Has broken faith wi’ the bauld Buccleuch.’—

—‘Where are ye gaun, ye mason lads,
Wi’ a’ your ladders lang and hie ?’—

¹splent on spauld—armour on shoulder.

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- ‘ We gang to herry a corbie’s nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee.’—
- ‘ Where be ye gaun, ye broken men ?’
Quo’ fause Sakelde, ‘ Come tell to me !’—
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the never a word o’ lear had he.
- ‘ Why trespass ye on the English side ?
Row-footed outlaws, stand !’ quo’ he,—
The ne’er a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust the lance thro’ his fause bodie.¹

Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross’d ;
The water was great and meikle of spait,
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.

And when we reach’d the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie ;
And there the Laird garr’d leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw ;
But ’twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castel wa’.

We crept on knees and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa’ ;
And sae ready was Buccleuch himself
To mount the first, before us a’.

He has ta’en the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead—
—‘ Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed !’

¹No Englishman was killed by the followers of Buccleuch ; and it is expressly stated in a manuscript of the period, quoted by Scott in his introduction to the ballad, that when the castle was entered ‘ Scroope himselfe and his deputy Salkeld . . . did keip thamselffis close.’ From the presence in ‘ Kinmont Willie’ of a statement to the effect that Salkeld was slain, we may infer that the ballad was not composed so early as the time of James VI.

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‘Now sound out, trumpets!’ quo’ Buccleuch;
‘Let’s waken Lord Scroope, right merrilie!’
Then loud the Warden’s trumpets blew—
‘O *whae dare meddle wi’ me?*’¹

Then speedilie to work we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a’,
And cut a hole thro’ a sheet of lead,
And so we wan to the castel ha’.

They thought King James and a’ his men
Had won the house wi’ bow and speir;
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
That put a thousand in sic a stear!

Wi’ coulters, and wi’ fore-hammers,
We garr’d the bars bang merrilie,
Untill we cam to the inner prison,
Where Willie o’ Kinmont he did lie.

And when we cam to the lower prison,
Where Willie o’ Kinmont he did lie—
—‘O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou’s to die?’—

—‘O I sleep saft and I wake aft,
It’s lang since sleeping was fleyed frae me!
Gie my service back to my wyfe and bairns,
And a’ gude fellows that speer for me.’—

Then Red Rowan has hente him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale—
‘Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.

‘Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!’ he cried—
‘I’ll pay you for my lodging maill,²
When first we meet on the border side.’

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;

¹ Robert Birrell says Buccleuch’s exploit was accompanied ‘by sound of trumpet’ (*Diary*, p. 37).

² maill—rent.

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At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns play'd clang!¹

—'O mony a time,' quo' Kinmont Willie,
'I have ridden horse baith wild and wood,
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

'And mony a time,' quo' Kinmont Willie,
'I've pricked a horse out oure the furs,²
But since the day I backed a steed,
I nevir wore sic cumbrous spurs!'—

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam wi' the keen Lord Scroope along.

Buccluch has turned to Eden water,
Even where it flow'd frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them thro' the stream.

He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he—
—'If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!'—

All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trow his eyes,
When thro' the water they had gane.

—'He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wad na have ridden that wan water,
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'

A more famous sept than the Armstrongs held the principal place among the clans that occupied the district

¹ Mr. Joseph Bain remarks that as Kinmont was a prisoner on parole, it is unlikely that he was confined in fetters (*Border Papers*, vol. ii. p. xiii). But Robert Birrell refers to 'the said Will: lyand in ironis w' in the irone yett' (*Diary*, p. 37).

² furs—furrows.

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watered by the Annan. The Johnstones, whose acknowledged chief was the laird of Lochwood, were strong numerically, and they enjoyed the reputation of being hardy warriors. Between this Annandale clan and the great Nithsdale house of Maxwell, a bitter feud had long existed. In a report sent to Lord Burghley in 1592, Edward Aglionby alluded with satisfaction to a quarrel which had the effect of materially weakening the power of Scotland for offensive purposes.¹ Common friends made an effort to close the breach; and the rival chiefs, Sir James Johnstone and Lord Maxwell, entered into a contract binding themselves and their dependants to 'remit and forgive all rancours of mind, grudge, malice, and feids that had passed or fallen furth between them in any time bygone.' This bond of union was soon broken, a foray into Nithsdale in 1593, by some of the more unruly of the Johnstones, resulting in a revival of the feud. A memorial of the raid exists in 'The Lads of Wamphray,' one of the ballads preserved in the Glenriddell MS.² Sir Walter Scott seems to have regarded the piece as of much historical value; and we need not doubt that it contains an early and a fairly trustworthy account of an affair which had important consequences. A probable reference to the 'Lads' who are immortalised by the ballad-writer is found in a pamphlet by David Wightman, minister of Applegarth, issued from the press of Robert Rae, 'Drumfries,' and dated 1718. In defending the deposition of John Taylor, minister of Wamphray, for altering the marches of his glebe and other 'unchristian actions,' the author of the pamphlet thus criticises some of the unfortunate clergyman's utterances: 'He' (Mr. Taylor) 'says further, That Mr. Brown and several others, and

¹ 'They' (the Maxwells) 'have bene in fede with the Johnsons this many yeres, which is a weakeninge of Scotland and a strength to England.' *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. i. p. 394.

² In volume xi. of Robert Riddell's *A Collection of Scottish Antiquities*, 1791 (Library of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland).

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he himself had a fighting Life with the Seed of the Riders of Wamfray, (by which he means Robbers and Thieves). If this be a discreet and Christian way of speaking, to upbraid his once Parishioners to whom he preached the Gospel for many Years, with the Faults of their Fore-fathers, I leave any to Judge. The Apostle, Eph. 4, 31, says, *Let all bitterness and evil speaking be done away*, but this Man doeth not only Print his scurrilous Language, but carries such Expressions (as the Riders of Wamfray and the like) to the Pulpit, where nothing but the grave Truths of God should be told.¹

'The Lads of Wamphray' is here reproduced from the Glenriddell MS. (pp. 34-36). The version published in the *Minstrelsy* is but Riddell's copy, slightly altered.

LADS OF WAMPHRAY—ANE OLD BALLAD.

Sometimes called The Galiard.

'Twixt the Girthhead & Langwoodend
Liv'd the Galiard² and Galiard's men.
It is the Lads of Lethenha',
The greatest rogues among them a'.
It is the Lads of Leuerhay,
That drove the Crichton's gier away.
It is the Lads o' the Kirk-hill,
The gay Galiard and Will o' Kirkhill,³

¹ *Mr. Taylor's Case Stated, or a Just Reply to a Book intituled A Vindication of Mr. John Taylor, Minister of Wamfray*, p. 37. The present writer is indebted to Mr. Macmath for drawing his attention to the sentences quoted above.

² The Galiard—William Johnstone of Wamphray, whose abode was Lethenhall. *Galliard* denotes a man of courage and spirit, and also a gay fellow. According to Sir Richard Maitland, the Border reivers had all nick-names:

'Thai theifs that steills, and tursis hame,
Ilk ane of thame hes ane to-name.'

(Aganis the Thievis of Liddisdail.)

³ Will o' Kirkhill. On 10th July, 1592, Sir John Carmichael wrote to Lowther: 'Willie Johnstoun of Kirkhill hes ane blak hors of my cousing Wille Carmychel of Reidmyre. It will ples your lordschip to cawse delyver him to the Lard of Gretnay.' *Calendar of Border Papers*, i. p. 400.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

But and the Lads o' Stefenbiggin,
 They broke the house in at the riggin.
 The Lads o' Fingland and Hellbackhill,
 They were ne'er for Good but aye for Ill.
 'Twixt the Staywood Buss and Langsidehill,
 They steld the broked Cow and branded Bull.
 It is the Lads o' the Girthhead,
 The Diel's in them for pride and greed.¹

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The galiard is to the Stable gane ;
 Instead o' the Dun the Blind he's taen.
 'Come out now, Simmy o' the Side,
 Come out & see a Johnston ride!
 Here's the boniest horse in a' Nithside,
 And a gentle Johnston aboon his hide.'
 Simmy Crichton's mounted then,
 And Crichtons has raised mony a ane.
 The Galiard thought his Horse had been fleet,
 But they did outstrip him quite out o' sight.
 As soon as the Galiard the Crichton he saw,
 Beyond the Saughbush he did draw.
 The Crichtons there the Galiard hae taen,
 And nane wi' him but Willy alane.
 'O Simmy, Simmy, now let me gang,
 And I vow I'll ne'er do a Crichton wrang !
 O Simmy, Simmy, now let me be,
 And a peck o' Goud I'll gie to thee !
 O Simmy, Simmy, let me gang,
 And my Wife shall heap it wi' her hand !'
 But the Crichtons wadna let Willy² bee,
 But they hanged him high upon a tree.
 O think then Will³ he was right wae,
 When he saw his Uncle guided sac.
 'But if ever I live Wamphray to see,
 My Uncle's death revenged shall be !'
 Back to Wamphray Willy's gane,
 And Riders has raised mony a ane.
 Saying, 'My Lads, if ye'll be true,
 Ye's a' be clad in the noble Blue.'

¹ Girthhead, etc. The places mentioned in the first sixteen lines of the ballad are all situated in the parish of Wamphray.

² Or the Galiard.

³ Will of Kirkhill.

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Back to Nidsdale they are gane,
And away the Crichtons' Nout they hae taen.
As they came out at the Wallpath¹ head,
The Crichtons bad them light and lead.
And when they came to the Biddess burn,²
The Crichtons bad them stand and turn.
And when they came to the Biddess strand,
The Crichtons they were hard at hand.
But when they came to the Biddess Law,
The Johnstons bad them stand and Draw.
Out then spake then Willy Kirkhill:
'Of fighting Lads, ye's hae your fill.'
Then off his horse Willy he lap,
And a burnish'd Brand in his hand he took.
And through the Crichtons Willy he ran,
And dang them down both Horse and man.
O! but these Lads were wondrous rude,
When the Biddess burn ran three days blood!
'I think, my Lads, we've done a noble deed;
We have reveng'd the Galiard's blood.
For every finger o' the Galiard's hand,
I vow this day I've killed a man.'
And hame for Wamphray they are gane,
And away the Crichtons' Nout they've ta'en.
'Sin' we've done na' hurt, nor will take na wrang,
But back to Wamphray we will gang.'
As they came in at Evanhead,
At Reaklaw-holm they spred abroad.
'Drive on, my Lads, it will be late;
We'll have a pint at Wamphray gate.
For where e'er I gang or e'er I ride,
The Lads o' Wamphry's on my side.
For of a' the Lads that I do ken,
The Lads o' Wamphry's King o' men.'

The Johnstones had ravaged the lands of Lord Crichton of Sanquhar, Douglas of Drumlanrig, Grierson of Lag, and Kirkpatrick of Closeburn. These influential proprietors therefore made complaint to Lord Maxwell as

¹Wallpath, Wellpath—a pass by which the Johnstones were retreating.

²The Biddes Burn—a rivulet which takes its course among the mountains on the confines of Nithsdale and Annandale.

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Warden, demanding redress. At first Maxwell refused to interfere; but he was soon forced to take action by King James, before whom fifteen women from Nithsdale, bearing the bloody shirts of the men slaughtered at Biddes Burn, had appeared praying for justice.¹ Knowing the difficulty of the task assigned to him, he entered into a bond of manrent with Drumlanrig, Closeburn, and Lag, thus doing his best to ensure their active support. The document fell into the hands of Johnstone of Cumbertrees, and was by him delivered to Sir James Johnstone, who prepared to meet his hereditary foes. At Dryfe Sands, near Lockerbie, in 1593, a sanguinary fight, ending in the rout of the men of Nithsdale, took place. Less fortunate than his principal allies, who all managed to escape, Lord Maxwell was overtaken about a mile from the old churchyard of Dryfesdale and struck from his horse. Escape being hopeless, he stretched out his hand for quarter, but it was severed from his arm, and, in a few seconds, he lay on the ground a mangled corpse.

New bitterness was added to the feud between the two clans by the Battle of Dryfe Sands. John, Lord Maxwell, the slain nobleman's successor, vowed to avenge his father's death; and after many years he was able to achieve his purpose, but only by stooping to assassination. Sir Robert Maxwell of Orchardtoun, who was married to Johnstone's sister, anxious to end a strife which seemed too likely, if allowed to continue much longer, to result in the destruction of both houses, arranged that the chiefs should

¹ Calderwood's *Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*, Wodrow Society edition, vol. v. p. 256. Perhaps it was the success of the Nithsdale women that suggested to Sir Alexander Colquhoun of Luss the expedient he adopted to secure the extermination of his enemies, the Macgregors. In 1603, soon after the Battle of Glen Fruin, he appeared before the king at Stirling, accompanied by seven-score women from Lochlmondside, all clad in mourning, and bearing aloft the blood-stained garments of their 'cruelly-murdered' relatives. Deeply horrified by the spectacle, James vowed vengeance against the whole clan of Macgregor.

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meet and try to adjust their differences. Each party was to be accompanied by a vassal, and Sir Robert was to act as mediator. On 6th April, 1608, the appointed meeting took place, but scarcely had greetings been exchanged when the attendants quarrelled and a shot was fired. Johnstone turned sharply round to see what had occurred, when Maxwell deliberately shot him through the back, and he fell from his horse mortally wounded. The assassin made good his escape to France, where he resided for four years; but, venturing at the close of that period to return to Scotland, he was apprehended in Caithness, and being taken to Edinburgh was tried and condemned to death.¹ At the place of execution he prayed earnestly that he might be forgiven by Johnstone's relatives, acknowledging 'the wrong and harme done to theme, with protestatioun that it wes without dishonour or infamie (for the worldlie part of it).'²

The feud which ended so dismally is alluded to in 'Lord Maxwell's Good-Night.' Scott expresses the opinion that as this plaintive poem does not mention the Chief's death, it must have been composed between 1608, when he left for France, and 1613, the year of his execution. But the ballad-maker seems to show ignorance of facts with which Maxwell's contemporaries must have been well acquainted. Lady Maxwell, who is represented as urging her husband to seek refuge in the house of her father, the Marquis of Hamilton, instead of going abroad, was dead before he became a fugitive. Nor would she have been likely to offer him 'ten thousand kisses' to remain in Scotland had she lived to see him enter the French vessel, for he had instituted a process of divorce against her. The verse of the ballad which is given first in Glenriddell's copy is in itself sufficient to show that the poet knew

¹ For account of the trial see Pitcairn's *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, vol. iii. pp. 28-53.

² *Denmylne MSS.* (Advocates' Library), vol. iv. p. 28.

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little about Maxwell and his relations.¹ Referring to the third line of this text, Professor Child observes, 'It is evident from the conjunction of mother and sisters that the person here intended is his (Maxwell's) brother Robert, to whom some years after the execution and forfeiture of Lord Maxwell the estates were restored.'² Now, a writer of the first quarter of the seventeenth century could hardly have confounded the ill-fated nobleman's brother Robert with his cousin, the Laird of Orchardtoun.

LORD MAXWELL'S GOOD-NIGHT.

(From the *Glenriddell Ballad MS.*, pp. 18-19.)

1. 'Adiew, Madam, my Mother dear,
But and my Sisters two!
Adiew, fair Robert of Oarchyardtoan!
For thee my heart is woe.
Adiew, the Lilly and the Rose,
The Primrose, sweet to see!
Adiew, my Lady and only joy!
For I manna stay with thee.
2. 'Tho' I have killed the Laird Johnston,
What care I for his feed?³
My noble mind dis still incline;
He was my Father's dead.
Both night and day I laboured oft
Of him revenge'd to be,
And now I've got what I long sought;
But I manna stay with thee.
3. 'Adiew, Drumlanrig! false was ay,
And Cloesburn in a band,
Where the Laird of Lagg fra my father fled,
When the Johnston struck off his hand.

¹ The verse, in a similar form, occurs in a copy of the ballad communicated to Percy by George Paton, but in that version the order is different.

² *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. iv. p. 36.

³ feed—feud.

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They were three Brethren in a band ;
Joy may they never See !
But now I've got what I long sought,
And I maunna stay with thee.

4. ' Adiew, Dumfries, my proper place,¹
But and Carlaverock fair,
Adiew, the Castle of the Thrieve,²
And all my Buildings there !
Adiew, Lochmaben's Gates so fair,
The Langholm Shank, where birks (they be !)
Adiew, my Lady and only joy !
And, trust me, I maunna stay with thee.
5. ' Adiew, fair Eskdale, up and down,
Where my poor friends do dwell !
The Bangisters³ will ding them down,
And will them sore compel.
But I'll revenge that feed mysell
When I come ou'r the sea ;
Adiew, my Lady and only joy !
For I maunna stay with thee.'

HER REPLY.

6. ' Lord of the Land, will you go then
Unto my father's place,
And walk into their Gardens green,
And I will you embrace.
Ten thousand times I'll kiss your face,
And sport, and make you merry ;'
' I thank thee, my Lady, for thy kindness,
But trust me, I maunna stay with thee.'

¹ ' My proper place '—' my chief residence.' ' Place ' means mansion. For a description of the castle referred to, see Mr. James Barbour's ' House of the Maxwells of Nithsdale,' in *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Antiquarian Society*, session 1905-6.

² Thrieve Castle is situated in Balmaghie parish, Kirkcudbrightshire. It was built by Archibald the Grim, third Earl of Douglas, towards the close of the fourteenth century. After the fall of the Douglasses the Thrieve became a royal castle, but the keeping of it was entrusted to the chief of the Maxwells.

³ Bangisters, or bangsters—burly violent men.

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7. Then he took off a great Gold Ring,
Whereat hang signets three :
' Hae, take thee that, my ain dear thing,
And still hae mind of me.
But if thow marry another Lord,
Ere I come ou'r the sea—
Adiew, my Lady and only joy !
For I maunna stay with thee.'
8. The wind was fair, the Ship was close,
That good Lord went away,
And most part of his friends were there,
To give him a fair convay.
They drank thair wine, they did not spare,
Even in the Good Lord's sight ;
Now he is o'er the floods so gray,
And Lord Maxwell has ta'en his good night.

III

MISCELLANEOUS OLD BALLADS AND SONGS

MOTHERWELL, in the introduction to his *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*, defines a historical ballad as a narrative song, having for its subject some incident which has fallen under the observation of 'contemporary and authentick annalists.'¹ In the preceding chapter of this book the writer limited his attention to ballads allowed by even the rigid definition quoted to be historical, reserving for the present chapter one or two which, though popularly regarded as historical, do not deal with incidents of which we have any knowledge derived from independent and trustworthy sources.

Among the productions that would have been noticed before, if a less strict definition of the historical ballad had been adopted, is 'Gude Wallace,' a Dumfriesshire version of the well-known 'Willie Wallace' communicated by Burns to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. The adventures of Sir William Wallace, the hero of the recital, formed one of the favourite themes of the Scottish minstrels of the fourteenth century. Walter Bower, the continuator of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, writing about the middle of the fifteenth century, alludes to certain songs about Wallace that were current in his day;² and undoubtedly Blind Harry, among other material, made use of fragments of popular verse.

¹ P. ii.

² See *Scotichronicon* (edit. Goodall), vol. ii. p. 176, footnote.

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'Gude Wallace,' however, is not one of the ancient songs referred to by Bower. There can be no doubt that its source was Blind Harry's 'Wallace'; but, as Professor Child remarks, the portions of the Scottish national epic, out of which the Wallace ballads were made, 'were perhaps themselves composed from older ballads, and the restitution of the lyrical form may have given us something not altogether unlike what was sung in the fifteenth, or even the fourteenth century.'¹

GUDE WALLACE.

(From *The Scots Musical Museum*, vol. v., pp. 498-9. Compare with Harry's account of the slaughter by the patriot of fifteen Englishmen at 'Lowchmaban' in 'The Wallace,' book v.)

'O for my ain king,' quo gude Wallace,
'The rightfu' king of fair Scotland.
Between me and my soverign blude
I think I see some ill seed sawn.'

Wallace out over yon river he lap,
And he has lighted low down on yon plain,
And he was aware of a gay ladie,
As she was at the well washing.

'What tydins, what tydins, fair lady,' he says,
'What tydins hast thou to tell unto me?
What tydins, what tydins, fair lady,' he says,
'What tydins hae ye in the south Countrie?'

'Low down in yon wee Ostler house,
There is fyfteen Englishmen,
And they are seekin for gude Wallace,
It's him to take and him to hang.'

'There's nocht in my purse,' quo gude Wallace,
'There's nocht, not even a bare pennie,
But I will down to yon wee Ostler house,
Thir fyfteen Englishmen to see.'

¹*The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. iii. p. 266.

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And when he cam to yon wee Ostler house,
He bad bencidite be there ;

‘Where was ye born, auld crookit Carl,
Where was ye born, in what countrie?’
‘I am a true Scot born and bred,
And an auld crookit carl just sic as ye see.’

‘I wad gie fifteen shillings to onie crookit carl,
To onie crookit carl just sic as ye,
If ye will get me gude Wallace,
For he is the man I wad very fain see.’

He hit the proud Captain along the chaffit blade,
That never a bit o’ meal he ate mair ;
And he sticket the rest at the table where they sat,
And he left them a’ lyin sprawlin there.

‘Get up, get up, gudewife,’ he says,
‘And get to me some dinner in haste ;
For it will soon be three lang days
Sin I a bit o’ meat did taste.’

The dinner was na weel readie,
Nor was it on the table set,
Till other fyfteen Englishmen
Were a’ lighted about the yett.

‘Come out, come out, now gude Wallace,
This is the day that thou maun die ;’
‘I lippen nae sae little to God,’ he says,
‘Altho’ I be but ill wordie.’

The gudewife had an auld gudeman,
By gude Wallace he stiffly stood,
Till ten o’ the fyfteen Englishmen,
Before the door lay in their blude.

The other five to the greenwood ran,
And he hang’d these five upon a grain,¹
And on the morn wi’ his merry men a’
He sat at dine in Lochmaben town.

¹ grain—a bough or branch. The word is written ‘grame’ in the following sentence: ‘The Kinge said they should laye in bande

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A story which does not tax the credulity of the reader so severely is told in 'Archie of Cafield,' a spirited ballad included in the Glenriddell Collection. Cafield, which is situated about a mile west of the grass-covered remains of Wauchope Castle, belonged of old to the Armstrongs. When mentioned in Bain's *Calendar of Border Papers* it is called 'Calfhills,' except once, when 'Cawfell' is the designation. Scrope, in a list of persons known to have been present at the enforcing of Carlisle Castle in 1596, mentions 'three of the Calfhills, Jocke, Bighames, and one Ally.'¹ Possibly these experienced jail-breakers are the three brothers whose exploit at Dumfries is the subject of 'Archie of Cafield.' A reference in 'A History of Dumfries,' by William Bennet, to a version of the ballad, in which the Johnstones and Maxwells are said to have been the actors, may be repeated here for what it is worth. A gentleman of Dumfries informed Bennet that he had 'often, in early life, listened to an interesting ballad, sung by an old female chronicle[r] of the town, which was founded upon the following circumstance:—In some fray between the Maxwells and Johnstones, the former had taken the chief of the latter prisoner and shut him up in the jail of Dumfries, in Lochmaben-gate; for in Dumfries they possessed almost the same power as in the Stewartry of Annandale, Crichton of Sanquhar, who was then hereditary Sheriff of Nithsdale, being their retainer. In a dark night shortly afterwards, a trusty band of the Johnstones marched secretly into Dumfries, and, surprising the jailkeepers, bore off their chief, manacled as he then was, and, placing him behind one of their troopers, galloped off towards the head of Locher, there to regain the Tinwald side and strike into the mountains

for all Lyddesdale, or elles be hanged upon a grame.' (Forster to Walsingham, April 23, 1584, in *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. i. p. 132.)

¹ *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. p. 122.

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of Moffat before their enemies should have leisure to start in pursuit.’¹

ARCHIE OF CAFIELD.²

An old West Border Ballad.

(From the *Glenriddell Ballad MS.*, pp. 14-17.)

1. As I was walking mine alane,
It was by the dawning o’ the day,
I heard twa Brothers make their maine,
And I listned well what they did say.
2. The eldest to the youngest said,
‘O dear Brother, how can this be!
There was three Brethren of us born,
And one of us is condemn’d to die.’
3. ‘O! chuse ye out a hundred men,
A hundred men in Christndie,
And we’ll a way to Dumfries Town,
And set our Billie Archie free.’
4. ‘A hundred men you cannot get,
Nor yet sixteen in Christendie,
For some of them will us betray,
And other some will work for Fee.
5. ‘But chuse ye out eleven men,
And we ourselves thirteen will be,
And we’ll away to Dumfries Town,
And borrow bony Billie Archie.’
6. There was horsing, horsing in haste,
And there was marching upon the lee,
Untill they came to the Murraywhat,
And they lighted a’ right speedylie.
7. ‘A Smith, a Smith!’ Dickie he crys,
‘A Smith, a Smith right speedily,
To turn back the cakers of our horses’ feet!
For it is forward we woud be.’

¹ ‘A History of Dumfries,’ in *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*, July 1826.

² Miswritten *Capeld*.

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8. There was a horsing, horsing in haste,
There was marching on the lee,
Untill they came to Dumfries (Port),
And there they lighted right manfulie.
9. 'There six of us will hold the horse,
And other five watchmen will be ;
But who is the man, among you a',
Will go to the Tolbooth door wi' me?'
10. O ! up then spake Jokie Hall,
Fra the laigh of Tiviotdale was he,
'If it should cost my life this very night,
I'll ga to the Tollbooth door wi' thee.'
11. 'O ! Sleepst thou, wakest thow, Archie laddie ?
O ! Sleepst thou, wakest thow, dear Billie ?'
'I sleep but saft, I waken oft,
For the morn's the day that I man die.'
12. 'Be o' good cheer now, Archie lad,
Be o' good cheer now, dear Billie,
Work thow within and I without,
And the morn thou's dine at Cafield wi' me.'
13. 'O ! work, O ! work, Archie,' he cries,
'O ! work, O ! work, ther's na working for me ;
For ther's fifteen stane o' Spanish Iron,
And it lys fow sair on my body.'
14. O ! Jokie Hall stept to the door,
And he bended it back upon his knee,
And he made the bolts that the door hang on
Jump to the wa' right wantonlie.
15. He took the prisoner on his back,
And down the Tollbooth stairs came he ;
Out then spak Dickie and said,
'Let some o' the weight fa on me.'
16. 'O ! Shame a ma !' co Jokie Ha,
'For he's no the weight of a poor flee.'
The Gray Mare stands at the door,
And I wat ne'er a foot stirt she,

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17. Till they laid the links out o'er her neck,
And her Girth was the Gold twist to be,
And they came down thro Dumfries Town,
And O ! but they came bonily !
18. Untill they came to Lochmaben port,
And they leugh a' the night manfulie,
There was horsing, horsing in haste,
And there was marching on the Lee,
Untill they came to the Murraywhat,
And they lighted a' right speedilie.
19. 'A Smith, a Smith !' Dickie he cries,
'A Smith, a Smith right speedilie,
To file off the shakles fra ma dear Brother,
For it is forward we wad be.'
20. They had not filtt a shakle of Iron,
A shakle of Iron but barely three,
Till out then spake young Simon brave,
'Ye do na see what I do see.
21. 'Lo ! yonder comes Lieutenant Gordon,
And a hundred men in his company.'
'O ! wo is me then !' Archie cries,
'For I'm the prisoner, and I must die.'
22. O ! there was horsing, horsing in haste,
And there was marching upon the lee,
Untill they came to Annan Side,
And it was flowing like the Sea.
23. 'I have a Colt, and he's four years old,
And he can amble like the wind,
But when he comes to the belly deep,
He lays himself down on the ground.'
24. 'But I have a mare and they call her Meg,
And she's the best in Christendie,
Set ye the prisoner me behind,
Ther'll na man die but he that's fae !'
25. Now they did swim that wan water,
And o' but they swam bonilie !
Untill they came to the other side,
And they wrang their cloathes right drunklie

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26. 'Come through, come through, Lieutenant Gordon!
Come through, and drink some wine wi' me!
For ther's a Ale-house neer hard by,
And it shall not cost thee one penny.'
27. 'Throw me my Irons, Dickie!' he cries,
'For I wat they cost me right dear.'
'O! shame a ma!' cries Jokie Ha,
'For they'll be good shoon to my gray mare.'
28. 'Surely thy minnie has been some witch,
Or thy dad some warlock has been,
Else thow had never attempted such
Or to the bottom thow had gone.'
29. 'Throw me my Irons, Dickie!' he cries,
'For I wot they cost me dear enough.'
'O! shame a ma!' cries Jokie Ha,
'They'll be good shakles to my plough.'
30. 'Come through, come through, Lieutenant Gordon!
Come throw, and drink some wine wi' me!
For yesterday I was your prisoner,
But now the night I am set free.'

The scene of 'Johnny Cock,' an ancient hunting ballad, has by some writers been located in Dumfriesshire. Scott, whose 'Johnie of Breadislee' is composed of stanzas taken from different versions of the piece, says: 'The hero of the ballad appears to have been an outlaw and deer-stealer—probably one of the broken men residing upon the Border. . . . It is sometimes said that this outlaw possessed the old castle of Morton, in Dumfriesshire, now ruinous. . . . The mention of Durisdeer, a neighbouring parish, adds weight to the tradition.'¹ According to Allan Cunningham, however, 'Breadislee, near Lochmaben, has been pointed out as the more probable residence of the hero of the song; and the scenery

¹ *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802. In Scott's version the ballad ends thus:

'Now Johnie's gude bend bow is broke;
And his gude graie dogs are slain;
And his body lies dead in Durisdeer,
And his hunting it is done.'

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in the neighbourhood, and the tradition of the country, countenance the supposition.’¹ That there was a tradition connecting the hero of the ballad with the Lochmaben district is certified by William Bennet, who, in an article entitled ‘A Two Days’ Tour in Annandale,’ writes thus : ‘From the Castle Hill, many of the ruined strongholds, once scattered so abundantly over this part of the country, lie within view of the observer. Two of these chiefly attract attention,—first, Dinwoody Castle, which is only half a mile to the westward, and is now utterly ruinous and overgrown with whins; and second, Cockiesfield, once the residence of a renowned freebooter, named John O’ Cock, who, during his lifetime, inspired with terror the whole of Annandale. There yet is extant an old ballad, which . . . narrates the manner of his death, which was quite in unison with the fierce hardihood of his life.’² We may be certain that the ballad Bennet refers to dealt with the exploits of ‘Johnny Cock,’ not of ‘John O’ Cock,’ and that his mistake was due to the carelessness with which the reciters pronounced their vowels.

Probably the subjoined version of ‘this precious specimen of the unspoiled traditional ballad,’ as Professor Child describes ‘Johnny Cock,’ is not unlike the ballad which Bennet knew.

JOHNNY COCK.

(John Fry’s *Pieces of Ancient Poetry from Unpublished Manuscripts and Scarce Books*, Bristol, 1814, p. 53. The ballad was transcribed from a 4to MS., purchased in Glasgow, which appeared to have been the text-book of some illiterate drummer.)

Fifteen foresters in the braid alow,
And they are wondrous fell;
To get a drop of Johnny’s heart-bluid,
They would sink a’ their souls to hell.

¹ *The Songs of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 317. One would like to be certain that there was a place near Lochmaben known as Breadislee, before the appearance of the *Border Minstrelsy*.

² *Traits of Scottish Life, and Pictures of Scenes and Character*, London, 1830, iii. 321. Bennet’s article appeared originally in *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*, Sept. 1826.

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Johnny Cock has gotten word of this,
And he is wondrous keen :
He[']s] custan off the Red scarlet,
And on wi' the linkum green ;

And he is ridden o'er muir and muss,
And over mountains high,
Till he came to yon wan water ;
And there Johnny Cock did lie.

He's taen out a horn from his side,
And he blew both loud and shrill,
Till a' the fifteen foresters
Heard Johnny Cock blaw his horn.

They have sworn a bluidy oath,
And they swore all in one,
That there was not a man among them a'
Would blaw such a blast as yon.

And they have ridden o'er muir and muss,
And over mountains high,
Till they came to yon wan water,
Where Johnny Cock did lie.

They have shotten little Johnny Cock,
A little above the ee :

‘ For doing the like to me.

‘ There's not a wolf in a' the wood
Woud ha' done the like to me,
She'd ha' dipped her foot in coll water,
And strinkled above my ee,
And if I would [not] have waked for that,
She'd ha' gane and let me be.

‘ But fingers five, come here !
And faint heart fail me nought,
And silver strings, value me sma' things,
Till I get a' this vengeance rowght !’

He ha[s] shot a' the fifteen foresters,
Left never a one but one,
And he broke the ribs a that ane's side,
And let him take tiding home.

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They have ridden o'er muir and muss,
And over mountains high,
Till they met wi' an old palmer,
Was walking along the way.

'What news, what news, old palmer?
What news have you to me?'

'Yonder is one of the proudest wed sons
That ever my eyes did see!'

'... a bird in a' the wood
Could sing as I could say;
It would go in to my mother's bower,
And bid her kiss me, and take me away.'

Carlyle says that in May 1834, at sight of London, he 'hummed to himself' these words from a version of the ballad sung by his mother :

'For there's seven foresters in yon forest,
And them I want to see, see,
And them I want to see.'¹

In 1884 Mr. Macmath obtained from Mrs. Aitken, sister of Carlyle, the two lines which precede those quoted by the great author ; and the completed stanza, as here given, was printed by Professor Child :

'O busk ye, O busk ye, my three bluidy hounds,
O busk ye, and go with me,
For there's seven foresters in yon forest,
And them I want to see, see,
And them I want to see.'²

More valued by the majority of readers than the ballads written to commemorate lawless deeds are those designed to illustrate the power of the master passion of Love. The minstrelsy of Dumfriesshire includes several 'old love-tales'; and among them is 'Fair Helen of Kirkconnel,' which Macaulay considered the finest of British ballads and Russell Lowell characterised

¹ *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. p. 171.

² *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. iii. p. 11.

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as 'a poem hardly to be matched in any language for swiftness of movement and savage sincerity of feeling.'¹

'Fair Helen' was the daughter of the laird of Kirkconnel, an estate represented in part by Springkell, which was long in the possession of the Maxwell family, and is now owned by Sir Edward Johnson-Ferguson. She was ardently loved by two gentlemen—Adam Fleming, 'heir to an estate in her neighbourhood, most probably the same which is now called Mossknowe,'² and Bell, the proprietor of Blackethouse. One evening she stood with her favoured lover, Fleming, on a romantic spot close to the murmuring Kirtle. Bell, who had sworn to take his rival's life, suddenly appeared in the midst of the trees on the opposite bank of the river, and levelled his carbine. Helen, observing the action, flung herself before her companion to protect him, and in a moment she was a lifeless form in his arms. After a desperate struggle the murderer was cut to pieces by Fleming, who fled from the country in an agony of grief, but, hearing a voice that cried to him day and night, soon returned to Scotland and died on Helen's grave.

Kirkconnel Churchyard, where Adam Fleming lies buried beside the lady who died to save him, is a circular enclosure on the banks of Kirtle Water. Thick masses of ivy and of ash foliage trail from the walls of a ruined chapel, and a fine old walnut-tree and a lordly sycamore shake their leaves over mouldering tombstones adorned with sculpturings of skulls and cross-bones. A slab, which has long been split in twain, covers the grave of the devoted lovers, and on it is the almost effaced inscription: *Hic jacet Adamus Fleming* above two long straight objects—figures of a cross and a sword, according to Sir Walter Scott, whose description is confirmed by a small eighteenth-century

¹Note to Essay on Wordsworth in *My Study Windows*. Lowell refers to the second part of Scott's version of 'Fair Helen.'

²Preface to the second edition of 'Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lee,' by Stewart Lewis. This poem was first printed in Edinburgh, 1796.

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picture of the tombstone.¹ Just outside the churchyard stands an ancient sandstone cross, which, if we may accept the current theory as to its origin, was erected to mark the spot where Helen died.² No record of its purpose is now borne by the cross; but a sunken space that may be seen on each arm was perhaps originally occupied by a plate with an explanatory inscription.

The age when the catastrophe which has been described took place has not been determined. Pennant says, 'the tragical event happened either the latter end of the reign of James V. or the beginning of that of Mary.'³ Stewart Lewis (1756-1818), who spent his early years in the vicinity of Kirkconnel, was led by 'several circumstances' to 'refer the period of the event to the latter years of Queen Mary, or the beginning of the reign of her son, James VI.'⁴ The conjecture that Helen was killed about the middle of the sixteenth century derives a certain support from the fact that the heroine's surname is affirmed by tradition to have been Irving, the name of the family known to have held the lands of Kirkconnel for a considerable time prior to 1609,⁵ when Robert Maxwell

¹ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1797.

² The late Sir John Heron Maxwell of Springkell conjectured that the monument was set up to indicate 'the site of the battle of Kirkconnel, where the Duke of Albany and the Earl of Douglas were defeated' (see his letter on 'A Picture in the Academy,' in *The Daily Telegraph*, 24th June, 1871). Among the slain in the skirmish at Kirkconnel, which took place on 22nd July, 1484, was Douglas of Drumlanrig; and it seems not improbable that the cross, though it is now popularly associated with Fair Helen, was erected to his memory. Merkland Cross, in the neighbourhood of Kirkconnel, commemorates the Master of Maxwell, who, after taking part in the same fight, was assassinated.

³ *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772*, Chester, 1774, vol. ii. p. 88.

⁴ 'Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lee' (Introduction), edit. 1815.

⁵ 'The old parish of Kirkconnel, now part of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, was in the possession of the Bells in the fifteenth century, but the

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became the proprietor. It is just possible that a bitter feud which existed between the Irvings and the Bells in the days of James VI. had its origin in the murder of Helen by the laird of Blackethouse.¹

A copy of the Kirkconnel ballad supplied by Dr. Clapperton of Lochmaben, and also one obtained from 'Mr. Henderson's MS.,' are found in the Glenriddell MS. Different versions were published by 'The Author of the Cave of Morar' (1776), Burns (in the *Museum*, 1788), Herd (1791), Ritson (1794), Scott (1802), and Kirkpatrick Sharpe (in Stenhouse's *Notes and Illustrations*, edit. 1853). 'The Author of the Cave of Morar'—probably John Tait, W.S., Edinburgh—printed the piece in his *Poetical Legends*, a thin quarto containing 'The American Captive' and other works. A ballad of his own, 'The Fatal Feud,' was founded on the Kirkconnel tradition, with which he had been made acquainted by Dr. Blacklock, who recommended the story as a good subject for a poem. Soon after 'The Fatal Feud' was written, Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* appeared, and the versifier discovered to his chagrin that it contained the story of Fair Helen, and also a reference to 'an antient ballad of no great merit' on her death. With 'a good deal of difficulty' he procured a copy of the old ballad, which he laid before the public, lest any of his readers should imagine that he had stolen from it the plan or sentiments of 'The Fatal Feud.'² The ballad which he thus rescued, being the earliest published version of 'Fair Helen of Kirkconnel,' has a good claim to insertion in this volume.

then owner forfeited his estate for participating in the Douglas Rebellion in 1451. . . . Soon after the estate was forfeited by the Bells it passed into the hands of the Irvings of Bonshaw. The first William Irving of Kirkconnell, so far as I have been able to ascertain, flourished about the year 1542.' ('Further Notes on the Old Hall of Ecclefechan,' by George Irving in *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Antiquarian Society*, 1898-9.)

¹ See *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol i. p. 394.

² *Poetical Legends*, Lond. 1776, p. 46. He gives no title to the ballad.

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FAIR HELEN OF KIRKCONNEL.

My sweetest sweet, and fairest fair,
Of birth and worth beyond compare,
Thou art the causer of my care,
Since first I lov'd thee.

Yet God hath given to me a mind,
The which to thee shall prove as kind
As any one that thou shalt find
Of high or low degree.

Yet nevertheless I am content,
And never a whit my love repent,
But think my time it was well spent,
Tho' I disdained be.

The shallowest water makes maist din,
The deepest pool the deadeest lin,
The richest man least truth within,
Tho' he preferred be.

O Helen fair, without compare,
I'll wear a garland of thy hair,
Shall cover me for ever mair
Until the day I die.

O Helen sweet, and maist compleat,
My captive spirit's at thy feet,
Think'st thou still fit thus for to treat
Thy pris'ner with cruelty.

O Helen brave, this still I crave,
On thy poor slave some pity have,
And do him save that's near his grave,
And dies for love of thee.

Curs'd be the hand that shot the shot,
And curs'd the gun that gave the crack,
Into my arms bird¹ Helen lap,
And died for love of me.²

¹ burd (maid).

² In Scott's beautiful version this stanza reads :

'Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!'

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O think na ye but my heart was sair,
When my love fell down, and spake na mair,
There did she swoon wi' meikle care
On fair Kirkconnel Lea.

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I cutted¹ him in pieces sma',
I cutted¹ him in pieces sma'
On fair Kirkconnel Lea.

O Helen chaste, thou wert modest,
If I were with thee I'd be blest,
Where thou liest low, and takest thy rest
On fair Kirkconnel Lea.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding sheet put o'er my Een,
And I in Helen's arms lying
In fair Kirkconnel Lea.

I wish I were where Helen lies,
Where night and day she on me cries,
I wish I were where Helen lies
On fair Kirkconnel Lea.²

This piece evidently consists of two poems which are quite different in character, the one being a feeble address to a scornful beauty, the other an impassioned lament over the slain heroine of Kirkconnel. The *Minstrelsy* version of the ballad also contains a few stanzas on 'Helen's' cruelty to a suitor; but in it they are kept separate from the rest of the piece—an arrangement for which the editor had no MS. authority. What Scott calls the 'first part' of 'Fair Helen' in all probability belonged originally to a poem which did not refer to the lady who was killed by Bell, but to some less famous Helen. It does not appear in the versions

¹ 'hackèd' (Scott).

² *Poetical Legends*, pp. 46-8. The above version, which was recovered from Tait's forgotten book by Mr. Macmath, is now reprinted for the first time. The 'antient ballad' does not mention Helen's surname; consequently Pennant must have learned from some other source that it was 'Irvine.'

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of Burns, Herd, Ritson, and Kirkpatrick Sharpe; and the Hoddam Collector expressly rejects it, saying, 'I subjoin the genuine words, which I have heard sung hundreds of times in Annandale, but never with any additional verses.'¹

The fate of Helen Irving has been sung by not a few modern bards. Scott's friend, John Leyden, author of *Scenes of Infancy*, and John Mayne of 'Siller Gun' renown, tried, not without success, to embellish the story. Sharpe left in MS. twenty-three indifferent verses on 'Fair Helen'; and another Annandale poet, Eaglesfield Smith, published a ballad on the subject, in which he followed a tradition that Helen was slain with an arrow, and that her murderer was chased to Tartary, and killed in that distant land.² Of the numerous Dumfriesshire writers of purely local fame who have rhymed about Helen, it may suffice to name Stewart Lewis, W. S. Irving, and Carlyle's cousin, Dr. Waugh. The tale has not, however, been commemorated only by minor poets. Wordsworth has a lyric entitled 'Ellen Irwin, or the Braes of Kirtle,' which begins thus:

'Fair Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian maid
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle.

¹ *Scots Musical Museum*, 1853 edition, vol. iv. p. 210.* Mr. T. F. Henderson describes Sharpe's 'Helen of Kirkconnel' as 'merely the "altered" *Museum* version in the Annandale dialect' (*Border Minstrelsy*, edit. 1902, vol. iii. p. 122). He is not strictly accurate in this, however, for, without taking dialectic peculiarities into account, half of the lines in Sharpe's version differ from the corresponding lines in the other.

² A correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (April 1797), labouring to vindicate the historical truth of Eaglesfield Smith's ballad ('William and Ellen,' 1796), quotes a barbarous rhyme, 'still sung in the country,' about the place of Helen's fate:

'And he chas'd him far awa',
And cut him into pieces sma'
Upon the tartar wild.'

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Young Adam Bruce beside her lay ;
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.'

'Ellen Irwin' is the best modern poem on the subject ; but the mode of treatment adopted does not suit a wild Border tale, and the word 'myrtle' in the fourth line has obviously been introduced simply because

'Rhymes are so scarce in this world of ours !'

Wordsworth's successor in the laureateship was deeply influenced by the story associated with 'Kirkconnel Lea,' though he did not attempt to 'shape it into rhyme.' He often repeated stanzas from the *Minstrelsy* version of 'Fair Helen' to his children ;¹ and, as the late Mr. M'Dowall of Dumfries pointed out, 'Oriana' is modelled on 'I wish I were where Helen lies.'²

The Kirkconnel tragedy has not been celebrated by poets only. In 1869 a fine painting by Mr. J. Archer, R.S.A., described as 'The Murder of Fair Helen of Kirkconnel,' figured in the Royal Academy. As imagined by the artist, the scene of the murder was the margin of a 'dead flat stream,' very unlike the Kirtle, which runs over a rocky bed. Mr. Archer was much surprised when informed by the late Sir John Heron Maxwell that the old tale had a real locality.³

'Annan Water,' another ballad in illustration of 'the unconquerable strength of love,' was first published in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Professor Child, not accepting it as ancient, neatly remarks that it is 'one of the "Scots poems wrote by the ingenious before" 1800.'⁴ But the verses must at least have been

¹ 'My father often quoted to us "Fair Helen."' Note from the present Lord Tennyson to the writer, dated 4th October, 1906.

² *Among the Old Scotch Minstrels*, 1888, p. 147.

³ See letter by Sir John Heron Maxwell in *The Daily Telegraph*, 24th June, 1871.

⁴ *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. iv. p. 184.

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in existence long before the end of the eighteenth century. Dr. James Currie, the earliest biographer of Burns, seems to have been acquainted with them in his youth, which was spent in Kirkpatrick-Fleming parish. 'I hope,' he wrote to the editor of the *Minstrelsy*, 'your "Annan Water" has some locality in it; if it has not, it ought to have. I have some sort of recollection of the stanzas you quote.'¹ Allan Cunningham thus refers to the ballad: 'Much of it is old, and much of it seems touched over and amended by a hand equally lucky and skilful. I have heard it sung on the banks of the Annan. Like all traditional verses, there are many variations. It has been long known by the name of "My love Annie's wondrous bonnie." I have some suspicion that the first verse has suffered corruption, from an old fragment which gave more the air of pleasure than of pathos to the song:

"O, Annan Water's wading deep,
Yet I am loth to weet my feet;
But if ye'll consent to marry me,
I'll hire a horse to carry thee."'²

If, as Cunningham assures us, numerous variations in the text were known in his day, it was not without reason that he regarded the ballad as old in substance. The version preserved in the *Songs of Scotland* is fitted only to show how well he understood the art of 'touching over.'

'The verses,' Scott declares, 'are the original words of the tune of "Allan Water," by which name the song is mentioned in Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany*,' but he does not give any authority for his statement. A copy of 'Allan Water,' printed perhaps about the end of the seventeenth century, was discovered some time ago by Mr. Macmath among the Laing Broad-sides, now at Barn-

¹ *Memoir of James Currie*, 1831, vol. ii. p. 352.

² *The Songs of Scotland*, 1825, vol. ii. pp. 102-3.

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bogle. This song may be quoted for the delectation of the curious reader :

‘Allan Water’s wide and deep,
and my dear Anny’s very bonny;
Wide’s the Straith that lyes above’t,
if’t were mine I’d give it all for Anny;
But why, O why should she disdain,
since my Heart’s Love to her I carry
Tho I had a Thousand Hearts in one
unshar’d I’d give them all to Anny.

Her Countenance and her black Hair
first captiv’d me, and then like Thunder
She disappear’d and ruin’d me,
and my poor Heart’s quite burnt to Tinder.
But why, O why should I despair?
for sure the gods to pity will move her
And send her this heart of mine
some cooling Balsom to deliver.

Dear Anny wilt thou look and see,
and sure I am thou’ll take compassion
On this poor Heart that mourns for thee,
such love alas is out of fashion,
All Day I wish, all Night I sigh,
and still I hope to find her changed,
But ah, alas all is in vain,
for sure my Ruine is designed.’¹

ANNAN WATER.

(From Scott’s *Border Minstrelsy*.)

‘Annan water’s wading deep,
And my love Annie’s wondrous bonny;
And I am laith she suld weet her feet,
Because I love her best of ony.

Gar saddle me the bonny black,
Gar saddle sune, and make him ready;
For I will down the Gatehope-Slack,
And all to see my bonny ladye.’

¹ MS. copy received from Mr. Macmath.

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He has loupén on the bonny black,
He stirr'd him wi' the spur right sairly ;
But, or he wan the Gatehope-Slack,
I think the steed was wae and weary.

He has loupén on the bonny grey,
He rade the right gate and the ready ;
I trow he would neither stint nor stay,
For he was seeking his bonny ladye.

O he has ridden o'er field and fell,
Through muir and moss, and mony a mire :
His spurs o' steel were sair to bide,
And frae her fore-feet flew the fire.

' Now, bonny grey, now play your part !
Gin ye be the steed that wins my deary,
Wi' corn and hay ye'se be fed for aye,
And never spur sall make you wearie.'

The grey was a mare, and a right good mare :
But when she wan the Annan water,
She couldna hae ridden a furlong mair,
Had a thousand merks been wadded¹ at her.

' O boatman, boatman, put off your boat !
Put off your boat for gowden money !
I cross the drumly stream the night,
Or never mair I see my honey.'—

' O I was sworn sae late yestreen,
And not by ae aith, but by many ;
And for a' the gowd in fair Scotland,
I dare na take ye through to Annie.'

The side was stey, and the bottom deep,
Frae bank to brae the water pouring ;
And the bonny grey mare did sweat for fear,
For she heard the water kelpy roaring.

O he has pou'd aff his dapperpy² coat,
The silver buttons glanced bonny ;
The waistcoat bursted aff his breast,
He was sae full of melancholy.

¹ wagered.

² diapered—' of variegated cloth ' (Child).

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He has ta'en the ford at that stream tail;
I wot he swam both strong and steady,
But the stream was broad, and his strength did fail,
And he never saw his bonny ladye!

O wae betide the frush saugh wand!
And wae betide the bush of brier!
It brake into my true love's hand,
When his strength did fail, and his limbs did tire.

'And wae betide ye, Annan Water,
This night that ye are a drumlie river!
For over thee I'll build a bridge,
That ye never more true love may sever.'

A somewhat revolting tale, showing how deadly a revenge an unprincipled woman is capable of taking when her blandishments are resisted, is told in 'Childe Owlet,' a piece printed by Buchan, which may give a fair idea of a ballad at one time current in Dumfriesshire. The hero is fastened to wild horses, and dragged up and down the moor till hardly a drop of blood is left in his veins:

'There was not a kow¹ in Darling muir,
Nor ae piece o' a rash,
But drappit o' Childe Owlet's blude
And pieces o' his flesh.'²

Professor Child expresses some doubt as to the antiquity of the verses, pointing out one or two suspicious lines.³ Mr. Macmath, however, has called the attention of the present writer to a traditionary story associated with Morton Castle, which clinches the Aberdeenshire collector's tale, and leaves it beyond doubt that there was a genuine old ballad on the subject, known in the South as well as in the North of Scotland. According to the Dumfriesshire tradition, the head of the unfortunate youth, who was bound round his neck and shoulders

¹ kow or cow—a twig or branch of a shrub.

² Buchan's *Ballads of the North of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 27.

³ *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. v. p. 156.

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with ropes tied to the horses, was torn from his body at Durisdeer. The horror of this circumstance so impressed the popular mind, that his grave, in the neighbourhood of the village, is still known as 'The Head.' The ancient ballad was the foundation alike of William Bennet's 'Young Edward,'¹ and of Dr. Simpson of Sanquhar's 'Legend of Morton Castle,'² but neither writer took steps to preserve it. Simpson carelessly quotes, as a fragment of the old ballad, a verse found almost word for word in Bennet's lay :

'Gae, fetch to me yon twa wild steeds,
Whilk gang on Knockenshaw ;
And ere I either eat or drink
To death I will him draw.'³

'Bonny Barbara Allan'—a much finer ballad—has been claimed for Annandale. The piece is probably Scottish in its origin, for Pepys heard it sung by Mrs. Knipp, in 1666, as 'a little Scotch Song,'⁴ yet there seems no good reason for connecting it with any part of Dumfriesshire. Sharpe, it is true, referring to an Annandale lady named Mrs. Barbara Allan, says : 'I strongly suspect her to have been descended from that Barbara concerning whom there is a song.'⁵ It requires little penetration, however, to see that when the famous ballad collector penned these words, he was merely joking. It is a fact that about a century ago 'Bonny Barbara Allan' was frequently sung in the parish of Annan ; but it does not follow that the verses were composed by a son of 'Blinkin' Bess,' or that the last sigh of Barbara's lover was heard on the banks of Annan Water.

In the ballad literature of the county, humour, if not

¹ Published in *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*, 1826, vol. ii. p. 402.

² *Gleanings among the Mountains*, n.d. pp. 57-63.

³ *Ibid.* p. 62.

⁴ *Pepys' Diary* (Bohn's edition), ii. p. 339.

⁵ *Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe*, ii. p. 25.

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nearly so common as pathos, is yet by no means rare. Kinmont Will, as he is borne from his dungeon on the shoulders of Red Rowan, shouts to Lord Scrope :

‘I’ll pay you for my lodging mail
When first we meet on the border side.’

And glancing at his irons, not yet removed, he cries,

‘Since the day I back’d a steed
I never wore such cumbrous spurs.’

‘Archie of Cafield’ has similar touches ; and even in the grim ballad which describes the doings of the Riders of Wamphray there are lines steeped in Scottish humour :

‘It is the lads o’ the Girthhead,
The Diel’s in them for pride and greed.

Turning to ‘The Lochmaben Harper’ we find as ‘merry’ a ballad as any that Autolycus could have drawn from his capacious wallet for the delight of Mopsa. The subject of this poem is the theft of a horse belonging to King Henry, by a blind minstrel from Lochmaben. Playing before the King and his nobles, the harper produces such ravishing music that they all fall asleep. He then leaves the room where they are assembled ; and, going to the royal stable, fastens with a colt’s halter the King’s ‘Wanton Brown’ to the tail of his own gray mare. English oats have not made the harper’s mare forgetful of its foal in Scotland, and soon it reaches Lochmaben, bringing with it the stolen horse. Not improbably the story told in the ballad had a certain foundation in fact. Too frequently the wandering musicians of the Border took advantage of the unrivalled facilities for the commission of theft which they enjoyed.

The version of the ballad printed in full in this book is not to be found in Professor Child’s comprehensive work on *The English and Scottish Popular*

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Ballads. It was taken from the Rev. William Graham's *Lochmaben Five Hundred Years Ago* (1865), where it is referred to as having been 'for centuries in the family of the Johnstones, who have been tenants of Lochmaben Mill for more than 400 years.' The writer of these pages has not had an opportunity of examining the original copy, the family to which it belonged having left the district, and their present address being unknown at Lochmaben. Doubtless the MS. belongs to a much later date than Mr. Graham supposed; but the version it gives is interesting, for nowhere else do we read that the harper 'lately' lived at Lochmaben, or that London was the scene of his exploit. The chorus:

'Sing fal, lal, ladal, a lal, lal, adal, a laddel, a la'

resembles that given in a version preserved by Glenriddell.

THE LOCHMABEN HARPER.

Did you ever hear of the silly auld harper,
That lately lived in Lochmaben toun,
And how he did up to London gang,
And stole King Henry's wanton broun?
Sing fal, lal, ladal, a lal, lal, adal, a laddel, a la.

Then out and spake the auld harper's wife,
And oh but she spake cunning and slee:
'If ye wad up to London gang,
Leave your cout foal at hame wi' me.
Sing fal, etc.

Gae, tak this halter into your hose,
That of your purpose ye mauna fail;
And gie't a wipe on the wanton's nose,
And tie her to your ain mere's tail.'
Sing fal, etc.

Away then rade the silly auld harper,
And he did ride baith night and day;

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And the very first man that he did meet,
It was King Henry on his way.
Sing fal, etc.

‘Harp on! harp on! thou silly auld harper;
For some of thy harping I long to hear.’—
‘Nae, by my sooth, and by ower dame,
I wad rather hae stabling for my mere.’
Sing fal, etc.

Then out and spake King Henry,
And he said to one of the stable grooms,
‘Gae, take the silly auld harper’s mere,
And tie her beside my wanton broun.’
Sing fal, etc.

And aye he harpit, and aye he carpit,
Till all the nobles they stood on the floor;
And aye he harpit, and aye he carpit,
Till they forgot to bar the door.
Sing fal, etc.

And aye he harpit, and aye he carpit,
Till all the nobles fell fast asleep:
He took the halter out o’ his hose,
And cunningly down the stair did creep.
Sing fal, etc.

He took the halter out o’ his hose,
That o’ his purpose he might na fail;
He gied it a wipe on the wanton’s nose,
And tied her to his ain mere’s tail.
Sing fal, etc.

Oh he’s ca’d her out at yon back gate,
Wi’ mony a nicker and mony a sneer;
But she niver let the wanton bite,
Till she was at Lochmaben wi’ the mere.
Sing fal, etc.

Oh he’s ca’d her out at yon back gate,
And o’er moor and moss, and through mony a hole;
She never let the wanton bite,
Till she was at Lochmaben at her foal.
Sing fal, etc.

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Oh she cam up Lochmaben street
Wi' mony a nicker and mony a sneer—
'Get up! get up! thou servant-girl,
Let in thy master and his mere.'
Sing fal, etc.

Up then gat the servant-girl,
And she keekit through the keyhole ;
'By my sooth, and by ower dame,
Ower mere has brought a braw big foal.'
Sing fal, etc.

'Oh haud thy tongue, thou servant-girl,
It's but the sun blinks in thy e'e.'—
'Na, by my sooth and by ower dame,
It's twice as big's a foal should be.'
Sing fal, etc.

Up then gat the auld harper's wife ;
She was aye the first up about the toun ;
She gat pickles o' groats into her lap,
And threw them before the wanton broun.
Sing fal, etc.

'Harp on! harp on! thou silly auld harper ;
For more of thy harping I long to hear :
In Scotland they have kill'd my foal ;
In England they have stoun my mere.
Sing fal, etc.

Harp on! harp on! thou silly auld harper ;
For more of thy harping I long to hear :
Here's twenty guineas for thy foal !
And twice as muckle for thy auld mere !'
Sing fal, etc.

Through the courtesy of the owner, the present writer is enabled also to give part of an unpublished version of the ballad from the Mansfield MS., acquired by Mr. Macmath in 1900. Hitherto that volume has been supposed by those who have not seen it to preserve lyrics only, but it has about a score of ballads and fragments of ballads, whereof about one half are not in print. David Laing, who, as well as Robert Chambers and Charles

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Kirkpatrick Sharpe, had the use of the manuscript, says it was 'written about the year 1780 by a lady residing in Edinburgh, and an intimate friend of Mrs. Cockburn.'¹ An additional stanza to one of the pieces² is written upon an inserted slip of paper which has been part of the outside of a letter addressed to

Miss St. C /
at (torn off here)

and Mr. Macmath surmises that the lady who made the collection was a Miss St. Clair.³

On page 244 begins without title :

1

Heard ye nae tell of a silly blind Harper
That lived low down in Loch Maeben town
And he is up through England gane
To steal King Henry's Wanton Brown
Sing Hey, etc.

The last three stanzas of the version give an addition to the tale of the Harper :

19

The Harper has mounted the Wanton Brown
And sell'd him at Edin^r on the causeway stone
Sic a horse was never in Scotland seen
Except King Jamie on him rides nane.
Sing, etc.

20

O he has sold his good English mare
And sae has he his ain colt foal
Now he's o'ergane wi' goud & gear.
He has far mair money than he can thole.

¹ Stenhouse's *Illustrations*, 1853, p. 402*.

² MS. p. 91.

³ He has come upon the names of St. Clair and Mansfield, in conjunction, in a commercial case before the Court of Session in 1762.

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21

The Harper he has a brown Lured lass
There's nae sic a tocher in a' our town
And a' our young lads when they cowp the glass
They drink to the health of the Wanton Brown.

Regarding these verses, Mr. Macmath writes: 'My impression is that Professor Child would have held that the selling of the horses was an unauthorised addition to the story proper, as told in about seven versions known to us. No doubt the writing down was earlier than that of any other of our copies, but that is by no means conclusive in its favour. To me it looks like an after-thought of somebody's.'

Soon after the Revolution which placed William and Mary on the throne, the ballad form of composition began to lose favour on the Border, as elsewhere. The poet, having ceased to regard himself as the natural chronicler of events worthy of record, learned to use his art chiefly for the expression of his individual emotions. Accordingly we find that about two hundred years ago the song took the place in literature which had long been occupied by the ballad.

'Annie Laurie' or 'Maxwelton banks are bonnie'—the most famous of the early lyrics of Dumfriesshire—was first printed by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, in *A Ballad Book* (1823). Allan Cunningham reproduced the piece in his *Songs of Scotland*, published in 1825, and about ten years later it was much altered and improved by Lady John Scott, who set the new words to a tune which she had composed for the ballad of 'Kempye Kaye.'¹

¹ In answer to a letter addressed to her by the editor of *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, Lady John Scott wrote on 4th Feb., 1890: 'Lady John Scott begs to say that she did compose the tune to "Annie Laurie," and altered the words a little to what she thought would sound better in singing. The tune of "Annie Laurie" she had before made for the words of an old ballad called "Kempye Kaye"; but being at Marchmont—Sir Hugh Campbell's, whose wife was her sister—she one day met with Allan Cunningham's poetry in the library there, and was much taken with the words of "Annie Laurie." She adapted the music

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The revised 'Annie Laurie,' with the music, was published in 1848, and it soon became widely known. A touching incident of the Crimean War, celebrated by Bayard Taylor, shows how the song could move the hearts of men in the distant fifties. Lying along the side of a battery, on the eve of the disastrous attack on the Redan, a few British soldiers joined in singing the familiar words. To quote the American poet :

'They sang of love and not of fame,
Forgot was Britain's glory :
Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,
Until its tender passion
Rose, like an anthem, rich and strong—
Their battle-eve confession.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned
The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learn'd
How English love remembers.'¹

Anna Laurie, the supposed heroine of the song, was a daughter of Robert Laurie of Maxwellton, who was made a baronet in 1685, about three years after her birth. In his introduction to the piece Kirkpatrick Sharpe writes thus : 'Anne was much celebrated for her beauty, and made a conquest of Mr. Douglas of Fingland, who is said to have composed the following verses,—under an unlucky star,—for the lady afterwards married Mr. Ferguson of Craigdarroch.'² William

she had composed for "Kempye Kaye" to them. The second verse of Allan Cunningham's words begins "She's backit like a peacock, She's breasted like a swan," etc., which Lady John did not like. She therefore altered it. The third verse she made entirely. . . . The time she put the tune to "Annie Laurie" at Marchmont was about the year 1834 or 5.' See *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, 4th Jan., 1893.

¹ 'The Song of the Camp.'

² *A Ballad Book*, p. 107.

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Douglas, who has been represented as the unfortunate lover, was the son of Archibald Douglas of Fingland and grandson of James Douglas of Mains of Morton. If rejected by the beautiful Annie Laurie he did not therefore 'lie down and die,' but paid his addresses to one Betty Clerk, who became his wife.¹ He favoured the cause of the Stuarts, and a reference to his 'reasonable opinions' has been discovered in a letter of Mrs. Ferguson's.

Sharpe got the lyric from a sufficiently good source. In a letter to George Farquhar Graham, dated 1848, he says, 'I long ago wrote down these verses from the recitation of Miss Margaret Laurie of Maxwelton, my father's first cousin, she and he being the children of sisters, daughters of the Lord Justice-Clerk Alva.' After he had so obtained the verses from his relative he appears to have written to her asking for such details as she was able to furnish regarding their origin. Miss Laurie's answer, dated Dumfries, Sept. 10th, 1812, is now in the possession of Mr. Macmath. She says: 'I receiv'd yours, but I am afraid I can give but a very imperfect account of what you wish to know. I have heard that the Admirer of Annie Laurie was a Douglas of Fingland & Ancestor to your friend Miss Douglas, Holmhill, but whether he was the Poet or who it was I cannot tell, but I know he had not been a successfull Lover, as she was married to Fergusson of Craigdarroch, and was Grandmother to the late Mr. Fergusson of Craigdarroch and Aunt to my father, and I have heard she was very handsome, but I know no more of the history.'²

Nearly everything that has appeared in print on Douglas's connection with the song is founded on Kirkpatrick Sharpe's statement that Mr. Douglas of Fingland is said to have composed the verses; and

¹ See Pedigree of the family of Douglas of the Mains of Morton, 'as far as it can be carried back authentically by the Drumlanrig charters,' in Ramage's *Drumlanrig and the Douglasses*, Dumfries, 1876, p. 320.

² From the original MS., lent by Mr. Macmath.

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Sharpe was not warranted in going even so far as that, unless he had more than Miss Laurie's letter to support the statement.

The Rev. Dr. King Hewison, author of *The Isle of Bute in the Olden Time*, holds that 'Annie Laurie' does not belong to the age in which William Douglas lived, but to a much later period.¹ A topical Dumfriesshire song dating back to the time of Queen Anne could hardly, he thinks, have escaped the notice of Burns, who spent many a night at Friars' Carse with Annie Laurie's kinsmen, and also of such collectors as Herd, Cromek, and the Editor of *The Nithsdale Minstrel*. Certainly the lines published by Kirkpatrick Sharpe could not have been 'long popular in the South of Scotland,'² as is affirmed by Chambers; but they may have been in existence, though known to very few. Annie Laurie's family would not be likely to multiply copies of a song containing no better description of her charms than this:

'She's backit like a Peacock,
She's breastit like a Swan,
She's jimp about the middle,
Her waist ye may weill span.'

Perhaps Dr. Hewison has too hastily concluded that Burns was unacquainted with 'Maxwelton banks are bonnie.' To the present writer it seems clear that the lines just quoted supplied hints for the second verse of 'Beware o' Bonie Ann,' one of the immortal poet's less happy efforts:

Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimply lac'd her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.'

The version of 'Annie Laurie' here given was taken

¹'The Annie Laurie Legends' in *The Glasgow Herald*, 8th Jan., 1898.

²*The Songs of Scotland prior to Burns*, p. 309.

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from Sharpe's MS. copy, now the property of Mr. Macmath. As printed in *A Ballad Book* the poem has 'I'd' instead of 'I'l' in the last line of each stanza, and in the fourth and fifth lines of the second stanza the words 'may weill' are transposed :

I

'Maxwelton banks are bonnie
Whare early fa's the dew;
Whare me and Annie Laurie
Made up the promise true;
Made up the promise true,
And never forget will I;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'l lay down my head and die.

2

She's backit like a Peacock,
She's breastit like a Swan,
She's jimp about the middle,
Her waist ye may weill span;
Her waist ye may weill span,
And she has a rolling eye,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'l lay down my head and die.'

'Bridekirk's Hunting,' another old lyric, is inspired by a genuine love of sport. It was first published in Carlisle's *Collections for a History of the Ancient Family of Carlisle*, which appeared in 1822. A copy, evidently taken from that work, was sent by Kirkpatrick Sharpe to David Laing, who reprinted the song in the 1853 edition of Johnson's *Museum*. In 1874 Miss Mary Carlyle Aitken published a version differing considerably from Carlisle's in *The Golden Treasury of Scottish Song*.

According to Sharpe, 'Bridekirk's Hunting' must be 'pretty ancient.'¹ This he inferred from the similarity between the name of a dog mentioned in the last verse—

¹*The Scots Musical Museum* (edit. 1853), vol. iv. p. 216*.

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‘Nipatatie’ to wit—and that of a drink thus praised in one of Beaumont and Fletcher’s plays :

‘My father oft will tell me of a drink
In England found, and nipitato called,
Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.’¹

Halliwell defines ‘nippitato’ as ‘Strong liquor, chiefly applied to ale. A cant term.’² Drinks and drinking have furnished many names for dogs in our own day; and ‘Nippitato’ may at one time have been as common a name as ‘Punch.’ About 1700 a tame hedgehog called ‘Nippotate’ was exhibited in London by one ‘Old Harry,’ who is not likely to have been the first to apply the name of the good old drink to an animal. In the version of the song reproduced by Miss Aitken there is no reference to ‘Nipatatie’; but the name being so unusual it is more likely that it occurred in the original, and was dropped in one or two copies made in days when its meaning was no longer clear, than that it represents an unwarranted deviation from the author’s text. It is more probable that, as composed, ‘Bridekirk’s Hunting’ closed with a spirited account of the gripping of the hare than with a bald prediction of its fate :

‘Up and down yon bonnie lea,
Up and down yon bonnie lea,
Up and down yon bonnie lea,
The huns’ll hae the hare.’

BRIDEKIRK’S HUNTING.

(From *Collections for a History of the Ancient Family of Carlisle*, London, 1822, p. 177.)

The Cock’s at the crawling,
The day’s at the dawing,
The Cock’s at the crawling,
We’re o’er lang here.

¹ *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Act iv. sc. ii. lines 27-29.

² *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, 3rd edition, vol. ii. p. 578.

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Bridekirk's hunting,
Bridekirk's hunting,
Bridekirk's hunting,
The morn, an' it be fair.

There's Bridekirk and Brackenwhat,
Limekilns and Thorniwhat,
Dormont and Murraywhat,¹
An' a' will be there.
Bridekirk's hunting, etc.

The Gingler and Gouler,
Tingler and Toulér,
Thy dog and my dog,
An' a' will be there.
Bridekirk's hunting, etc.

Fie, rin Nipsey,
Fie, rin Nipsey,
Fie, rin Nipsey,
Thou gangs near the hare.
Bridekirk's hunting, etc.

But bonny Nipatie,
But bonny Nipatie,
But bonny Nipatie,
Thou gripes the wylie hare.
Bridekirk's hunting, etc.

¹All the places are within a radius of half a dozen miles on or near the right bank of the Annan.

IV

COVENANTING AND JACOBITE VERSE

NOWHERE was the influence of the Covenanting movement of the seventeenth century more strongly felt than in Dumfriesshire. The men of Nithsdale particularly were firmly attached to those great principles for which the Church of Scotland so bravely contended, and not a few of them suffered martyrdom, meeting death with quiet courage. But though the movement profoundly affected life and thought in Dumfriesshire, it did not greatly enrich the poetical literature of the county. A short Latin poem, in tolerable elegiacs, written by a noted Annandale minister, and one or two pungent satires—fair examples of a kind of verse that has always appealed to Scotsmen—are the only Covenanting ‘relics’ of which Dumfriesshire can boast.

In a letter to Marion M'Naught, written in 1637, the famous Samuel Rutherford says, ‘Remember me to Mr. John Brown: I could never get my love off that man: I think Christ hath something to do with him.’ The Brown referred to, after some delay, entered the ministry of the Church of Scotland, and in 1655, when about forty-five years of age, he was ordained to the pastorate of Wamphray. Settled in a parish where rude ballads on thieving expeditions were more valued than the psalms of David and the odes of Horace, the pious and scholarly clergyman had doubtless much to vex his soul. John Taylor, the minister of Wamphray who was deposed for ‘un-Christian actions’ in 1715, asserts in his *Vin-*

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dication that 'Mr. Brown,' like himself, 'had a fighting Life with the Seed of the Riders of Wamfray'; but Wightman of Applegarth, the clergyman who replied to his pamphlet, says: 'As for Mr. Brown, we never hear of his complaints that way, and if he had any he did not imprudently publish them to the World.'¹

After the Restoration Brown denounced the arbitrary proceedings of the Government so strongly that in 1662 he was not only compelled to leave his charge, but was one of nineteen ministers who were prosecuted. The last seventeen years of his life were spent in Holland, which afforded an asylum to many of the persecuted adherents of the Covenant. He died in September, 1679, leaving a hundred guilders to the poor of the Scottish Congregation at Rotterdam and a few valuable books to his daily companion, Robert M'Ward, another exiled Presbyterian minister of much learning. Brown is described by Wodrow as 'a Man of very great Learning, warm Zeal, and remarkable Piety,'² and he is one of the 'lights' referred to by Colonel Cleland in an elegy on M'Ward, who followed his friend to the tomb in 1681:

'He did survive the rest of these great lights,
Discharg'd their native Lands by cursed Wights,
Which makes our stroke more misty, sad and dim,
For while he liv'd they seem'd to live in him.'³

The most important of Brown of Wamphray's publications are an *Apologeticall Relation of the Sufferings of Ministers of the Church of Scotland since 1660*, a historical defence of the Kirk; *The Life of Justification*, which Dr. James Walker considers 'by far our most thorough exposition and discussion of the doctrine it handles';⁴

¹ *Mr. Taylor's Case Stated*, Drumfries, 1718, p. 37.

² *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* (1721), vol. i. p. 141.

³ *A Collection of Several Poems and Verses* (1697), p. 119.

⁴ *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland* (1872), p. 22.

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and a Latin work of stupendous size, entitled *De Causâ Dei adversus anti-Sabbatarios*. With patristic as well as classical literature Brown displays a wide acquaintance; and his style is superior to that of most Scottish theological writers of the seventeenth century.

The Covenanting poem, in virtue of which the old theologian has a place on our list, occurs in the *Apologeticall Relation*, and is entitled 'Ad Lectorem.' After presenting a picture of the Kirk in her desolation, the author of the verses proceeds to commend his book to the reader as a work in which the misfortunes of his country are related and their causes explained. Glancing at three periods of Scottish history—those which had ended respectively in 1560 and 1638 and that which was to close in 1688—he asserts that in them all, the Priest, disguised or undisguised, had been the great cause of the country's misery. Twice had the enemy fallen; a third and final overthrow awaited him.

AD LECTOREM.

Sub pedibus lunam Mulier nunc calcat; amicta
Sole; caput stellæ, ceu diadema, tegunt.
Conspicitur medio ut signum admirabile cœlo;
Fixa velut medio, petra decora, Salo.
Sæpius incerto varia est ut Cynthia vultû,
Parte sui Semper, totaque Sæpe latet.
Fulgida Justitiæ nuper quæ sole, tenebris
Mox velut infernis tecta, sepulta jacet.
Firma licèt Petræ maneant fundamina, quassis
Mœnibus et fulcris, contremit ipsa domus.
Sidera lapsa polo, capiti diadema revulsum
Sponsaque pulvereâ squallida sorde sedet.
Quisquis es hæc toto qui non spectaveris orbe,
Exhibet hic scenam, Scotia mœsta tibi.
Scotia quam varios casus sit passa; procellis
Quassa quibus, quantis, te docet ille liber:
Præsulis hic mitræ pondus, Regisque tiaræ
Penditur, et Christi jura, bilance pari.
Invadit Christi regnum cum principe præsul,
Arrogat hic Regi, quod rogat ipse Sibi.

COVENANTING AND JACOBITE VERSE

Præsulis est Scotis relegandum nomen Averno,
Prora quibus præsul, puppis et una mali est.
Hic videas vicibus ternis quas infula strages
Ediderit; præsul, Cerberus iste triceps.
Pontificum primus fuit impetus; iste retusus
Evasit virgo, quæ fuit ante lupa.
Vis tamen huic facta est vulpinâ fraude secunda,
Restiterat zelo plebs, proceresque; pio.
Tertius horrifici est nunc impetus ille Leonis.
Cernitur hic vulpes qui fuit ante Lupus:
Bestia bis cecidit, bis cornua fracta revinxit.
Tertia certa feram et vasta ruina manet.¹

The following rendering in unrhymed English verse of the first half of 'Ad Lectorem' will doubtless be condemned by scholars as unpardonably free; but it may serve to convey the general sense of the more felicitous lines of the poem to readers who cannot use the original, and are ready to say, like Queen Katherine,

'Pray speak in English.'

TO THE READER.

Clothed with the sun and diademed with stars,
A Woman trod upon the golden moon.

Fair as a rock amid the waste of brine,
Or fickle Dian in the Heaven, she stood.

For her—the Bride—a glorious house was built,
But now its courts are dark as Stygian caves.

Firm its foundations on the granite rest,
But fissured are its walls, its columns rent.

And she, the Bride that wore the starry crown,
Her beauty scorned, lies weeping in the dust!

Whoe'er thou art, in all the radiant earth,
Whose heart is still unsaddened by her woe,

Take from my hand this lettered scroll, and read
A tale of agony and blood and tears;

¹ From '*An Apologeticall Relation*. Printed in the Year 1665.'

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

And learn how much Immanuel's Rights outweigh
The prelate's mitre and the monarch's crown!

In a satirical poem by William Cleland, the distinguished Covenanting soldier, whose elegy on M'Ward has been quoted, we read :

'My feet nev'r filed that brooky hill
Where Ancient Poets drank their fill.

But these who have the *Thames* and *Humber*,
The *Tees* and *Tyne*, need not them cumber
To go so farre to fetch a drink ;
For I am verie apt to think
There's als much Vertue, Sonce, and Pith
In *Annan*, or the Water of *Nith*,
Which quietly slips by *Drumfries*,
Als any Water in all *Greece*.
For there and several other places,
About mill-dams, and green brae-faces,
Both elrich Elfs and Brownies stayed,
And green-gown'd Fairies daunc'd and played,
When old John Knox, and other some
Began to plott the baggs of Rome,
Then suddenly took to their heels,
And did no more frequent these fields.'¹

These lines do not afford a sufficient voucher for the statement of a writer on the subject of the Cameronian Regiment that Colonel Cleland 'was born near Dumfries.' Still, we can hardly read them carefully without feeling confident that the writer had some close tie to the district. It is true that as a military officer he had found it necessary to visit different parts of the county. But in the passage quoted, he appears to show an interest in the Dumfriesshire dales and their associations, which

¹'Effigies Clericorum,' in *A Collection of Several Poems and Verses composed upon Various Occasions by Mr. William Cleland, Lieutenant Colonel to my Lord Angus's Regiment*, 1697, p. 59.

²*Historical Record of the Twenty-Sixth or Cameronian Regiment*, edited by Thos. Carter, Lond. 1867. Note on p. 10.

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cannot easily be explained if we adopt the supposition that he first watched the 'Nith quietly slipping by Drumfries,' and cast his eyes on the 'green brae-faces' of Annandale, after the commencement of his career as a soldier. It will be observed that the Annan and the Nith are the only Scottish rivers mentioned, not even the Clyde receiving attention; and that while the poet merely names the Thames and Humber, he lingers over the Border streams as if they had for him old and pleasant associations.

Cleland's poems were published in the form of a small octavo, price 12s., in 1697, eight years after his heroic death at Dunkeld. The happiest composition in the book is a lyric entitled 'An Addition to the Lines of Hollow my Fancie,' the readers of which are informed in a prefatory note that it was written by the author at College before he was eighteen years of age. The longest pieces are 'A Mock Poem upon the Expedition of the Highland-host' and 'Effigies Clericorum,' satires which show that the gallant gentleman, though a puritan to the core, was a diligent student of 'Hudibras,' and aspired after fame as a Scottish Samuel Butler, but scarcely prove that

'Cleland was an universe of Wit.'¹

The 'Mock Poem' has a well-known reference to the disappearance of rapine on the Border—a change attributed by the poet, not to those combined efforts by the English and Scottish authorities against law-breakers which had been rendered practicable by the Union, but to the unnoticed labours of Cameronian evangelists,

'Whose bare preaching now
Makes the thrush bush keep the Cow,

¹ 'Elegie on Lieutenant Colonel Cleland,' composed by the Laird of Airdrie, and printed in the same volume with Cleland's poems (p. 137).

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Better than Scots or English Kings
Could do by Kilting them with strings.¹

The poetical productions of Brown of Wamphray and Colonel Cleland were written for cultivated men, and did not pass into the hands of the common people. But when the most deeply hated of all the persecutors died, there appeared a coarse and vigorous Dumfriesshire poem on Sir Robert Grierson of Lag and his associates, which at once became popular among the shepherds and weavers of the wide district where 'Lag' had long been an object of superstitious dread. The plan of the work is well indicated by its full title:

AN ELEGY

IN MEMORY OF THAT VALIANT CHAMPION

SIR ROBERT GRIERSON

OF LAG.

Or, the

Prince of Darkness his Lamentation for, and Commendation of his trusty and well beloved Friend, the Laird of Lag, who died Decem. 23d, 1733,

Wherein the Prince of Darkness sets forth the Commendation of many of his best Friends, who were chief Promotors of his Interest, and Upholders of his Kingdom in the Time of Persecution.

Very useful and necessary to be read by all who desire to be well informed concerning the chief Managers, and Management of the late Persecuting Period.²

¹ *A Collection of Several Poems and Verses*, p. 30. James I. had vowed that the rush bush should keep the cow. Sir David Lindsay, alluding to the stern dealings of James V. with law-breakers 'through the Highland and the Border,' says:

'John upon-land been glad, I trow,
Because the rush bush keeps the cow.'

The Complaint.

² The Sixth Edition, Corrected and Enlarged. Glasgow: Printed in the year 1757.

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Among the numerous champions of evil who are passed in review is Claverhouse, who receives the Devil's thanks for his services, but is somewhat cruelly reminded of his flight from the field of Drumclog. Due honour is accorded to another famous soldier, the blood-thirsty Dalyell, and also to several eminent lawyers and statesmen, including Mackenzie, Rothes, and Lauderdale. Nor is Satan slow to acknowledge his indebtedness to the last two Stuart Kings for their strenuous efforts to root out Presbyterianism and advance the cause of Rome. But his warmest praise is reserved for Sir Robert Grierson, the Laird of Lag, of whom he can say :

'Thro' all the large tract of his time,
He never did my ways decline.'¹

Instances are given of the services which had been rendered by Sir Robert in killing defenceless peasants ; and, of course, the Wigtown affair is referred to. Having surveyed the private life, as well as the public career, of his favourite with profound satisfaction, the Prince of Evil remarks significantly :

'Now Lag lives hot and bien with me !'

Sir Robert Grierson seems to have been a man of courage and capacity ; but it may well be doubted whether even Dalyell pursued the infamous work of hunting down and shooting recusants with more manifest zest. It is not surprising, therefore, that a poem attacking his memory with peculiar force and malignancy was heartily welcomed by the peasantry of southern Scotland. The popularity of the *Elegy*, which was published in Glasgow in the form of a chap-book of 24 pages, did not soon decline. Forty years after Sir Robert's death the tenth edition was reached, and four years later the eleventh appeared. Even in the first quarter of the nineteenth century the poem was reprinted, and it found many appreciative readers in rural parts.

¹ *Ib.* p. 3.

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The interest with which we peruse *Lag's Elegy* is enhanced by our knowledge that the piece was familiar to two Scottish writers of the first rank. Sir Walter Scott possessed a copy of the chap-book,¹ which may have supplied him with one or two hints for 'Wandering Willie's Tale'—the gem of *Redgauntlet*, and one of the finest efforts of his genius. Possibly one of the most effective touches in his description of Sir Robert Redgauntlet was suggested by this line in the *Elegy*:

'He bore my image on his brow.'

And it is not unlikely that he had a vivid recollection of the rhymster's picture of Lag sitting 'in the great chair' in hell when he represented the cavalier as pre-eminent among lost souls. For a deeper and sterner spirit than that of Scott the 'Lament of the Prince of Darkness' had attractions. As a youth Carlyle pored over the yellow pages of some copy of the pasquil; and it may not be too much to suppose that in the grim humour which characterises so many passages in his writings there are traces of the influence of the uncouth Covenanting rhyme.

The elegy has been ascribed to different authors. Carlyle told his nephew, Mr. John Carlyle Aitken, that it was written by John Orr, the old schoolmaster so graphically sketched in the *Reminiscences* as a man 'religious and enthusiastic, though in practice irregular with drink.'² But there is nothing to show that Carlyle had documentary evidence in favour of his theory, which contradicts the tradition of his own parish and receives no support from anything known as to Orr's tastes and studies.

A copy of the eleventh edition of *Lag*, sold by Mr. Richard Cameron, Edinburgh, in 1896, bore below the date (1777) the following jotting in a hand-writing

¹ See *Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe*, vol. i. p. 147.

² Fergusson's *Laird of Lag*, 158-9. *Reminiscences*, by Thomas Carlyle, vol. i. p. 38 (Froude).

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evidently belonging to the eighteenth century: 'This Elegy wrote by Will. Wilson, schoolmaster at Douglass, about the year 1735.'¹ Wilson was certainly engaged in literary work soon after Sir Robert Grierson's death, and Covenanting subjects appear to have specially attracted him. In 1735 he edited and printed from an old MS. a beautiful sermon by Adam Kae, minister of Borgue 'in the time of Scotland's purest Reformation, which was in the year 1648.'² His introduction to the work in question has a reference to Charles II. as 'that vile abominable profane Monster'—a description of the hated king not more flattering than the one in *Lag's Elegy*:

'Brave Charles Stewart of renown,
The best that ever wore a crown
For whoredom and adultery,
For incest and prophanity,' etc.³

There is good reason to believe that by 1735 Wilson had also tried his hand at verse. The fourth edition of *The Cloud of Witnesses* contains a copy of the rhyming inscription on Samuel Rutherford's monument at St. Andrews; and the epitaph is followed by this line:

'October 9th, 1735, by W. W.'

'I take "W. W.,"' writes the chief authority on Covenanting literature, 'to be the initials of William Wilson.'⁴ A long and very feeble ballad by 'W. W.,' entitled 'Bothwell Lines,' of which there are several editions, mostly undated, may likewise have been composed a year or two after the departure of Grierson. Wilson had some connection with Tinwald; and it has

¹ Mr. Cameron's *Catalogue*, No. 154, 1896.

² A Sermon concerning the Believer's sitting under Christ's Shadow. Preached from Canticles ii. 3, by that faithful minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. Adam Kae, etc. Printed for and sold by William Wilson, schoolmaster at Broad-Wood, in the parish of Carluke, 1735.

³ Sixth edition, pp. 6-7.

⁴ Letter from Dr. Hay Fleming dated 29th May, 1905.

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been conjectured that he wrote the inscription on the Covenanter's tombstone in the churchyard of that parish.¹

But the weight of evidence seems to favour the claim of a third schoolmaster, William Irving of Hoddam, who died in 1782. That Irving was the author is stated as a well-known fact in the following sentence from an article on Stewart Lewis, a native of Ecclefechan, published in an early number of *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*: 'He (Lewis) was put for a short time under the ferula of the parish schoolmaster, a character famed in Annandale by the name of Dominie Irving, and still more generally known as the writer of a wicked satire called *Lagg's Elegy*, of which a copy might once have been found in almost every cottar's window in the south of Scotland.'² As the contributor of the article quoted was well acquainted with Stewart Lewis personally, it is highly probable that the Ecclefechan bard was one of his authorities for the ascription of the pasquil to Dominie Irving. Testimony in favour of Irving's claim is borne also by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who, in a note to some memoranda on Lag and his connections, condescends to name the writer of a poem which he despised as popular among the vulgar only. 'The Elegy on Lag,' he says, 'was written as I have heard by one Irving, a schoolmaster, ancestor of the author of "Fair Helen of Kirkconnel" and other poems, who some years ago, in a fit of insanity, cut his own throat in Edinburgh.'³ In an article on 'Epitaphs and Sepulchral Inscriptions,' contributed to the *Scots Magazine*, W. S. Irving, the bard who committed suicide, refers to the old Hoddam teacher as the author of *Lag*. Citing a dozen satirical lines, he says they are by 'old Mr. Irving, the author of the well-known philippic

¹ *Martyr Graves of the South of Scotland*, chap. 24 (*Dumfries Standard* of 23rd May, 1894).

² No. 116, 19th April, 1834.

³ Sharpe MS., in the possession of Mr. John A. Fairley, Barnton Gardens, Davidson's Mains.

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upon the persecutors entitled *Lag's Elegy*.¹ W. S. Irving was a native of Hoddam parish, and had devoted much attention to its literary associations. His testimony, highly valuable in any case, is almost conclusive if he was descended from the satirist, as Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who knew him personally, affirms. The lines quoted in the article were written by William Irving at the age of 75. An imposing monument of red sandstone, still one of the wonders of Hoddam Churchyard, had been erected: 'By James Clow of Land in memory of Mary Hunter, his spouse. She was Daughter of Robert Hunter, late in Middleshaw, and Sister to John Hunter, in Braehead of Hoddam. She was a virtuous wife, a loving mother, and one esteemed by all that knew her. And to be short, to her praise she was the wife that Solomon speaks of in the xxxi. chap. of the Book of Prov. from the 6 verse to the end.' On reading this inscription the grim old dominie drew a piece of chalk from his pocket and wrote on the pedestal of the monument as follows:

'She was the wife!' oh Solomon, thou fool,
To make a pattern o' this grubbing tool;
She clothe her house in silk and scarlet fine!
Say rather i' the linsey woolsey twine,
Her husband 'mongst the elders at the gate!
Yes—known for nothing but an empty pate,
For guzzling down whole chappins o' sma' beer,
And selling meal and maut a groat too dear.
Such were the honest silly *Clows*—say clowns,
Which every roll of honest fame disowns,
Who erst, like Moses, brake the ten commands,
That is the sacred relics of the Lands.'²

'Beelzebub's Advice to the Forestallers of Victual,' a hitherto unpublished piece composed by Irving in his old

¹ *Scots Magazine* for May, 1816.

² The estate of Land included part of Birrens, where the great Roman Camp, lately excavated by the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, is situated. Numerous valuable antiquities had been dug up in one of Clow's fields, but he would not suffer them to be collected and sent to a museum for preservation.

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age, so closely resembles *Lag* as at once to connect itself with that pasquil in the mind of the reader. Satan is represented as addressing the unscrupulous 'mealmongers,' who were growing rich through oppression, in these words:

'Monopoly and forestalling
Practise with all your might,
Do not regard the cries of those
That are in heart upright.

That law of Love and Charity
Which Christ himself shall use
In judging of Mankind at last
With all your hearts refuse.'¹

The present writer has been able to glean some information regarding William Irving from a fragment of his journal and commonplace book now in the possession of Mr. Fairnie, long headmaster of Ecclefechan Public School. Where Irving lived before he was placed, at the age of 42, in charge of the school at Hoddam, is unknown; but as he occasionally visited Dumfries 'to see his relations,'² it may be conjectured that he was a native of the county town or the neighbourhood. Like most poets, Irving was very poor; and he seems to have had some difficulty in collecting the 'school wages,' which formed a considerable portion of his small income, and were as often received in the shape of butter or meal as in coin of the realm. At Hoddam he devoted much time to church work, being at once session-clerk and treasurer of the congregation. Amongst the miscellaneous contents of the little book owned by Mr. Fairnie are sundry jottings relative to receipts and disbursements by the elder on account of the church. The minister of Hoddam during the greater part of Irving's residence in the parish was the Rev. Alexander Orr—a fact in which the origin of Carlyle's

¹ Irving's *Commonplace Book*, lent by Mr. Fairnie, Ecclefechan.

² *MS. Journal*.

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mistake as to the authorship of *Lag's Elegy* may possibly be found. If Carlyle's informant first transferred the surname of the minister to the elder, it would be easy in the second place to confound the two dominies.

Irving died in May, 1782, and was buried in the churchyard of Hoddam, which is also the repository of the dust of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who often boasted of his connection with Lag the Persecutor. Peeping from the long grass of the churchyard is a modest headstone bearing this inscription: 'To the Memory of Mr. William Irving, who was schoolmaster of this parish for 36 years. He died May 11th, 1782, aged 78 years.'

As a specimen of *Lag's Elegy*, a few lines about the less prominent 'Managers of the Persecution' may be cited. The notes which are appended to the extract will suffice to show that Irving was largely indebted for his facts to Alexander Shields's *A Short Memorial of the Sufferings and Grievances, Past and Present, of the Presbyterians in Scotland, particularly of those of them called by nickname Cameronians*, 1690. Probably he was not acquainted with that work in its complete form, but merely with the pages quoted in *A Cloud of Witnesses*, the first edition of which appeared in 1714.

A GROUP OF PERSECUTORS.

(From *Lag's Elegy*, Sixth Edition, 1757, pp. 17-19.)

My friends that were of lower note
In justice should not be forgot.
As Alison,¹ who here did dree
A hell on earth for pleasing me.
Bonshaw,² more fierce than I can tell,
Who bade some sound the Whigs go hell,

¹ John Alison, Chamberlain to the Duke of Queensberry, when dying, said: 'He had damned his Soul for the Duke his Master' (Shields's *Short Memorial*, p. 32).

² James Irving of Bonshaw, who captured Donald Cargill in 1681. Patrick Walker affirms that Cargill, being treated with severity, cursed Irving, and the present laird of Bonshaw records a family tradition

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And my beloved Kennaway,¹
Who plagu'd the hill-men every day.
And Charters that was so severe,
'Bove twenty journeys in one year
This Varlet willingly did go,
To hasten the Fanaticks' woe.²
Strahan,³ Murray⁴ and Annandale,⁵
Who in my causes had great zeal.
Drummond,⁶ Stretton,⁷ and bloody Reid,⁸
Who shot my foes till they were dead.
Buchan,⁹ Inglis,¹⁰ and Wester-hall,¹¹
Balfour,¹² and others, great and small.

that 'Cargill cursed the descendants of Bonshaw for two hundred years' (*The Book of the Irvings*, p. 72). Among the revellers seen by Wandering Willie in hell was 'Wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr. Cargill's limbs till the blude sprung' (*Redgauntlet*, Letter xi.).

¹ Thomas Kennoway, guilty of illegal severities in Livingston and other parishes. Murdered in 1684. (See Wodrow's *History*, 1721-2, vol. ii. p. 432).

² George Charters, a factor to the Duke of Queensberry. According to Shields, this persecutor 'vaunted he had made twenty-six journeys in one year in pursuit of the whigs' (*A Short Memorial*, p. 32).

³ Was prominent in the Wigtown tragedy, 1685.

⁴ Lieut. Murray, who shot one John Broun, after quarters given' (*Shields*, p. 37).

⁵ The Earl of Annandale was placed, at the age of 20, upon a large Commission to act against the Covenanters. See the *Annandale Family Book*, vol. i. cclvii.

⁶ Lieutenant-General Drummond, who shot Alexander Linn at Craigmodie, in 1685.

⁷ Lieut. Straiton, concerned in the execution of Daniel M'Michael at Dalveen, 1685.

⁸ It was by Reid that George Wood, the last martyr, was killed.

⁹ 'Col. Buchan, a most violent persecuter in Galloway and the Shire of Air, by Robberies took from the People upwards of 4000 pounds Scots' (*Short Memorial*, p. 31).

¹⁰ Two men of this name—father and son—won a dubious renown for persecuting zeal. In the epitaph of a martyr buried in Fenwick churchyard the younger is oddly described as 'a tyger rather than a Scot.'

¹¹ Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall.

¹² Clydesdale was the scene of Major Balfour's exploits.

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Stenhouse,¹ Maitland,² and Bolloch-mill,³
Colzean⁴ and Windram,⁵ men of skill.
Crichton,⁶ Lauder,⁷ and many moe,
Who sought the hill-men's overthrow.
Halton,⁸ who did himself perjure,
To bring Mitchel⁹ to an ill hour.
Lowrie of Maxwelton¹⁰ also
Unto these wild-men was a foe,
And so was Craik¹¹ of Stewarton;
Baillie,¹² and these gave Smith¹³ his doom.
And all the Bishops in the land
Were ready still at my Command,
My statutes for to execute,
On all whom I did persecute.

¹ John Douglas of Stenhouse, equally obnoxious to the Covenanters as a spoiler and a 'papist.'

² Capt. Maitland, one of the officers who shot Thom, Urie, and Cook, at Polmadie in May, 1685. (See Wodrow's *History*, ii. p. 508.)

³ and ⁴ Ayrshire persecutors. 'The Laird of Culyean, with the Laird of Ballochmilne, shott Gilbert Mcadam in the Paroch of Kirk-michel, July 1685' (*Sheilds*, p. 38).

⁵ Major Windram, one of the four men who tried Margt. Lauchlison and Margt. Wilson, the Wigtown martyrs.

⁶ 'Cruel Crichton,' Sheriff-depute, a terror to the recusants of Ayrshire.

⁷ Lieut. Lauder, an oppressor in the same county.

⁸ and ⁹ Mitchell, upon his life being promised, acknowledged to the Privy Council that it was he who had attempted to kill Sharp. Halton and others afterwards swore that no promise had been made, and Mitchell was sent to the gallows. (See Burnet's *History of his own Time* (edition 1725, vol. ii. p. 715).)

¹⁰, ¹¹, ¹², ¹³, Wm. Smith, a youth of 18, having been condemned to death by Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwelton, Douglas of Stenhouse and John Craik of Stewarton, was shot by Cornet Baillie in Glencairn on 4th March, 1685. 'Lawrie of Maxwelton's Steward reported that a cup of wine delivered that day into his hand turned into congealed blood; but be that as it will, himself died by a fall from his horse some years after' (*Cloud of Witnesses*). Laurie was the father of 'Bonnie Annie Laurie.'

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Dumbarton,¹ Bruce,² and Rob Dalzel,³
And other worthies I could tell,
As Ezekiel Montgomery,⁴
The worst fine monster⁵ that could be,
And that vile wretch call'd Sherriff Hume⁶
That was right worthy of his room,
And old tree-legged Duncan Grant,⁷
Who of his wickedness did vaunt.
Eglinton,⁸ Ironcable,⁹ and Lord Ross,¹⁰
Who did the Whigs murder and toss,
From sixty to the Revolution,
Imbrew'd their hands in persecution,
They murder'd and did stigmatize¹¹
Such as my service did not please ;
They banisht them to foreign nations,
And sold them to the new plantations.
With rigour great they took their gear,
'Cause they my livery would not wear.
None forwarder among them all
Than noble Grierson of Lag-hall,

¹ Earl of Dumbarton. The regiment referred to in the song 'Dumbarton's drums beat bonnie O' was called after this nobleman, its first commander.

² Capt. Bruce of Earlshall, who defeated Cameron at Airdsmoss. Scott makes Wandering Willie speak of 'Earlshall, with Cameron's blude on his hand' (*Redgauntlet*, Letter xi.).

³ Sir Robert Dalziel of Glenae.

⁴ An exactor in Renfrewshire.

⁵ 'Monster' may be a misprint for 'Monger.' Montgomerie is described by *Sheilds* as 'a great Fine Monger,' p. 32.

⁶ Alex. Hume, Sheriff-depute of Renfrewshire.

⁷ 'Duncan Grant, a Creple with a Tree Leg, a very outrageous Persecuter, exacted in Clidsdale from poor People, above 1500 pounds' (*Sheilds*, p. 31).

⁸ Probably Alexander, eighth Earl. Not the 'Good Lord Eglinton' whom Cornet Bolton extolled in a 'mock sermon' preached in the presence of the delighted Samuel Pepys.

⁹ Macaulay of Ardencaple, West Dumbartonshire. He killed two Covenanters near Eaglesham in 1685.

¹⁰ Lord Ross was Captain of one of the six troops commanded by Claverhouse as Colonel.

¹¹ Brand.

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Whose worthy actions make him fit
In the great chair now to sit,
'Bove Korah and his company,
For all his friendship done to me.
This honour he doth well deserve,
For he unweariedly did serve
Me to his utmost every day,
To keep my kingdom from decay.

The most romantic episodes in the history of Scotland in the eighteenth century are the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745. In the earlier of these risings, Dumfries and Galloway, which had been so prominent in the religious and political movement identified with the name of Richard Cameron, played a not inconspicuous part. It is true that the Chevalier de St. George could not boast of many friends in the district. The memory of Claverhouse was still so fresh that it would have been little short of a miracle if much popular enthusiasm for 'the rightful king' had been evoked. But if only a handful, the declared adherents of James were as brave as any that ever wore 'the rose that's like the snaw'; and the story of their struggle at Preston is one to stir the heart of every Scotsman. It is a matter for pride that the men of the Western Border, when once they took their stand, whether as Covenanters or Jacobites, never shrank from hardship for the sake of principle. And surely :

'It little skills what faith men vaunt,
If loyal men they be
To Christ's ain Kirk and Covenant,
Or the King that's o'er the sea.'¹

Queen Anne was never hated by the Scottish partizans of the Stuarts as William had been. In the relics collected by Hogg and other writers, the references to her are expressive of nothing worse than a certain good-natured contempt—stronger epithets than 'couthy'² are

¹ Mr. Andrew Lang's *Kenmure*.

² *The Riding Mare*.

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not applied to her. But a spirit of revolt manifested itself even before the death of the queen. Under various pretences the disaffected gentry of Scotland assembled in different parts of the country to ascertain their strength. A famous gathering of the Jacobites of the Border took place on 29th May, 1714, when Francis Maxwell of Tinwald, Robert Johnston of Wamphray, Robert Carruthers of Rammerscales, and other gentlemen of influence met at Lochmaben, their professed object being to attend a horserace. From an account of the meeting preserved in the Rev. Peter Rae's *History of the late Rebellion*, one of the first original works published in Dumfries, it would appear that the proceedings were of a sufficiently bold character. Two plates that were offered as prizes to be run for bore devices which clearly showed the political sympathies of the organisers of the meeting. 'The one had a Woman with Ballances in her Hand, the Emblem of Justice; and over the Head was "Justitia," and at a little Distance, "Suum cuique." The other had several Men with their Heads downwards, in a tumbling Posture, and one Eminent Person erected above the Rest; with that Scripture, Ezekiel xxi. 27, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose Right it is, and I will give it him."' ¹ After the race the Jacobite lairds and their followers, with drum beating and colours displayed, marched to the cross of the little town, and, falling on their knees, drank the health of their King.

This gathering is celebrated in 'Lochmaben Gate,' an animated ballad published in James Hogg's untrustworthy but indispensable *Jacobite Relics of Scotland*:

'As I came by Lochmaben gate,
It's there I saw the Johnstons riding;
Away they go, and they fear'd no foe,
With their drums a-beating, colours flying.

¹ *History of the late Rebellion*, 1718, p. 49.

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All the lads of Annandale
Came there, their gallant chief to follow ;
Brave Burleigh, Ford, and Ramerscale,
With Winton and the gallant Rollo,' etc.

Hogg says he took the verses from Cromek, and 'sorely suspected' that the author was no other than the chief contributor to *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*.¹ 'Lochmaben Gate' was reprinted in one of Allan Cunningham's own compilations, *The Songs of Scotland*, with a suggestive note : 'This border song found a place among the Jacobite Relics. I have no doubt of its beauty, but much of its authenticity. That it was composed on a heartless or a drunken rising of some of the Jacobite gentlemen of the district is certain ; that it was written near the time of the rebellion of 1715 is far more than questionable.'²

Queen Anne died on Sunday, 1st August, 1714, and the Elector of Hanover was without delay proclaimed King, to the great satisfaction of the mass of the people. George was hardly a year upon the throne when the first Jacobite rising took place. Simultaneously with the Earl of Mar in the Highlands, the Earl of Nithsdale raised the standard of revolt in Dumfriesshire. So unpopular, however, was the Stuart cause in the district, that few rallied at his call. His own tenants, instead of following him, poured from Caerlaverock, Troqueer, and Tereagles into Dumfries to defend the Protestant Succession.³ Even the landowners of Jacobite sympathies, with few exceptions, hesitated to come forward, being shrewd enough to perceive that the Rebellion was doomed to failure.

As it was deemed essential that the recognised head of the movement should be a Protestant, the command of the Border insurgents was given to William Gordon,

¹ *The Jacobite Relics in Scotland*, 1819, vol. i. p. 294. *Lochmaben Gate* does not appear in *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*.

² *The Songs of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 217.

³ *History of the late Rebellion*, pp. 256-7.

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Viscount Kenmure. His name did not prove so potent to commend the cause of James as had been expected; and it was but a small company that followed him when he rode forth from Kenmure, never to return. It has been taken for granted that the Galloway song, 'O Kenmure's on and awa', Willie,' which Burns worked over, and to which Allan Cunningham added three verses, relates to him. Mr. Macmath, however, conjectures that the hero of the song was Robert, the fourth Viscount, who, when the standard of King Charles II. was set up at Killin on 27th July, 1653, in what is generally known as Glencairn's rising, joined early by crossing the Clyde with a hundred horsemen, returning south to raise more forces, and who was henceforth one of the most active leaders against the Commonwealth and Protectorate. William, the sixth Viscount, the 'grave, full-aged gentleman . . . too calm and mild to be qualified for such a post,' who was thrust into the Jacobite command in the south of Scotland in 1715, seems, in Mr. Macmath's view, less likely to have inspired such a stirring piece than the dashing leader of 1653 who marched with a rundlet of strong waters before him, called 'Kenmore's Drum,' and who when imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle in 1659, escaped over the wall on a Sunday with his two servants in the time of the sermon.¹

The Jacobites of Southern Scotland were not cheered by a single gleam of success. They had designs upon Dumfries, the capture of which would have encouraged many halting sympathisers to come forward, and would have rendered it possible to get supplies by sea from France and Ireland; but discovering that the town was crowded with resolute defenders, they did not venture to approach it. Baffled in their plans, Kenmure and Nithsdale marched under Forster into England, only to meet with disaster at Preston.

¹ See Mr. Macmath's article on 'Kenmure' in *The Scots Peerage*, v. p. 121.

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No mercy was shown to the vanquished. Kenmore atoned with his life for his rash attempt to overturn the throne of the Guelphs. Nithsdale also would have perished on the scaffold but for the devotion of his beautiful and accomplished wife, a daughter of William, Marquis of Powis. Though the Earl's religious and political opinions were so obnoxious to his own tenants that many of them had felt bound to take arms against him, his personal popularity was great, and there was hardly a farmer on his estates who would not cheerfully have gone to the block to save him. The joy which prevailed among his tenantry when the news of his extraordinary escape from the Tower of London was received, is described in 'What news to me, Carlin?' a 'roughly Scottish' song of which a line or two may be old :

'What news to me, Carlin?

What news to me?'

'Enough o' news,' quo' the lusty Carlin,

'Best news that God can gie.'

The hopes of the Scottish Jacobites were not completely extinguished by the events of 1715. It was argued that before long England would tire of German rule, and Lowland Scotland forget the mistakes committed by princes of northern blood. Then, it was known that beyond the Grampians thousands of the bravest warriors in the British Islands eagerly awaited the signal to rise. Every night in the houses of the more enthusiastic Jacobites, glasses were drained in honour of King James, and songs, much more remarkable for humour than refinement, were sung in denunciation of the Whigs.

The time to make another effort to rescue the crown from the Guelphs having, in the opinion of James, arrived, Charles Edward landed at Moidart in July, 1745. Contrary to his expectations, the Prince did not receive much support from Nithsdale and Galloway. The sons of the men who fought at Preston had not abandoned Jacobite principles, but, with few exceptions, they had

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ceased to hold them so firmly as to be willing to risk land and life for the sake of the Stuarts. Almost the only gentleman of influence belonging to the district who joined the army of Prince Charles Edward was James Maxwell of Kirkconnell, whose account of the rising, written when he had fled to France after Culloden, was made use of by Scott as an interesting narrative by one who had himself witnessed the events described.¹

Dumfries was still fervently Hanoverian; and some of its inhabitants distinguished themselves by cutting off a small detachment of the rebels—an exploit which furnished the Prince with an excuse for exacting from the Corporation eleven hundred pounds when he halted in the town on his return from England in December, 1745. Annan also supported King George; but the men of the smaller burgh thought that loyalty could be better displayed by shouting, 'Death to the young Pretender!' in beer-shops than by engaging in perilous enterprises. During the Rebellion, the Magistrates and Council met in the public-houses almost daily to discuss the movements of the enemy. Much liquor was, of course, consumed at the expense of the burgh, and some of the publicans' bills remained unpaid until 1749.²

A curious unpublished Latin diary by the Rev. James Gatt, minister of Gretna from 1730 to 1787, who in November, 1745, when his parish was invaded by the Highlanders, 'retired in a vessel to Bolness,³ and was in the greatest danger,'⁴ contains several fragments of poetry relating to the Rebellion. On November 23rd, a fortnight after his return from exile, the good minister wrote:

'Impius heu saevit toto Mars orbe Britanno;
Aurea pax alis placidis O quando redibit!

¹ The work was printed by the Maitland Club in 1841.

² *Minutes of Annan Town Council*, 1749.

³ Bowness, on the Cumberland side of the Solway.

⁴ *Minutes of Gretna Kirk Session*.

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Urbem Carleolum cuncti liquere rebelles
Praesidio excepto ; Deus, omnia prospere redde.
Florida apud Scotos sit Christi Ecclesia semper ;
Insidiae hostiles vanae recidunt simul omnes.'

(Impious War, alas, rages in the whole British world. O when will golden Peace with placid wings return ? All the rebels have left the city of Carlisle, the castle excepted. O God, bring a prosperous issue to all things. May the Church of Christ always flourish among the Scots : may all hostile snares come at once to hopeless ruin !)

On December 28th, he penned these lines :

'Princeps Carleolum obsidet,¹
Postquam terga fugae turba rebellium
Mandavit : Dominus precor
Felicem acceleret singula ad exitum
Montanos cito cogito
Arcem reddere et oppidum
Ut Laudes recinat, Rex bone, quisque tuas.'

(The Prince is besieging Carlisle, after the crowd of rebels has taken to flight. I pray that the Lord may bring to a happy and speedy issue all events, and compel the Highlanders to give up castle and town, that everyone may sing again Thy praises, Good King !)

An abler Dumfriesshire writer—Thomas Blacklock, student of philosophy—expressed his hatred of the Highlanders in three wofully turgid odes printed in the first edition of his poems (1746), but excluded from subsequent editions. In one of them the fate of 'God-like Gardner' is bewailed : in another the 'bluidie Cumberland' of Jacobite song is addressed in these words :

'O glorious youth, delight of fame,
Th' immortal Muse's favourite theme,
And Heaven's peculiar care !'

Probably not one of the familiar old songs in honour of Prince Charlie was composed in the county. 'Cumber-

¹The Prince referred to is the Duke of Cumberland, to whom Carlisle was surrendered on December 31st.

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land and Murray's Descent into Hell,' which, as printed in Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, has a reference to 'Nith in spate,' is not an old piece, but a forgery from the practised hand of Allan Cunningham. It is to that poet that we owe nearly all the Dumfriesshire Jacobite ballads and lyrics that have real merit. In another chapter of this book, 'The Young Maxwell' and 'The Sun's bright in France' will be given; but the close of the present chapter appears to be a suitable place for an extract from 'Carlisle Yetts,' a ballad which tells of the cruelties perpetrated at Carlisle after the suppression of the rebellion :

'White was the rose in his gay bonnet,
As he faulded me in his broached plaidie;
His hand whilk clasped the truth o' luvie,
O it was ay in battle readie!
His lang, lang hair in yellow hanks,
Waved o'er his cheeks sae sweet and ruddie;
But now they wave o'er Carlisle yetts,
In dripping ringlets clotting bloodie.'

V

THE CLASSIC SCHOOL

AFTER the Union of the Kingdoms in 1707, intercourse with the South became unrestrained. The rich field of purely English literature was opened up, and new forms of composition were brought into fashion. When Southern influence began to be seriously felt, Pope was the dominant intellectual force in England. It is therefore not surprising that before the eighteenth century was far advanced the poetry of Dumfriesshire, notwithstanding the traditions of the past, had become for a time as classical in style as that of any English county. In respect of mechanical accomplishment there was undoubtedly a gain; but the vigour and wild freshness so characteristic of the early native verse had disappeared.

Thomas Blacklock, who, though he 'did not remember to have seen light,'¹ could yet describe earth and sea and sky as accurately as most of Pope's disciples—a circumstance which reveals the falseness of the eighteenth century method of nature-painting—was born at Annan on 10th November, 1721. To cultivate the taste for poetry which the blind boy manifested, his father and a few friends read to him the works of Spenser, Milton, Pope, Thomson, Prior, and Allan Ramsay. At the age of twelve he wrote an ode entitled 'To a Little Girl

¹The expression is Dr. Samuel Johnson's. See *Piozzi Letters*, i. 110. In 1773 Blacklock was introduced to Johnson, who, as Boswell records, 'received him with a most humane complacency.' (*The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 1785, p. 41.)

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whom I had offended,' which, as a juvenile production, is very good. In 1741 he was sent to Edinburgh University by Dr. Stevenson, an accomplished physician, into whose hands some of his verses had fallen. Eager to win distinction, he ventured in 1746 to publish an octavo volume of poems in Glasgow. Another edition was not called for before 1754, and thus Blacklock had abundance of time to correct his poems. The second edition contains an introduction by G. G——n, his friend, Gilbert Gordon of Halleaths. It was published by Hamilton, Balfour & Neill, Edinburgh, and was so successful that the author cleared by it a hundred guineas.

Meanwhile he had become acquainted with David Hume, who tried to secure for him tutorships, and sent copies of his verses to Joseph Spence, the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and other influential men. Interested in the blind descriptive poet, Spence, in 1754, published a pamphlet entitled, 'An Account of the Life, Character, and Poems of Mr. Blacklock; Student of Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.' This account, in a condensed form, he prefixed to a quarto edition of the Poems, which came out by subscription in London in 1756, and had so large a sale that a second quarto edition and an octavo edition were published before the end of the same year. Gratified that his efforts to serve Blacklock had not been in vain, Spence urged him to write a tragedy, assuring him that he had sufficient interest with Garrick to get it acted. Though the success of John Home's *Douglas*, which had just appeared, might have tempted the poet to try his hand on a drama, Spence could not persuade him to begin one. According to his biographer, Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*, he wrote a tragedy at a later period, but lost the MS.¹

In 1762, Blacklock married Miss Sarah Johnston, the daughter of a Dumfries surgeon and the 'Melissa' of his

¹'Life and Writings of Dr. Blacklock,' prefixed to *Poems by the late Reverend Dr. Thomas Blacklock*. Note on p. viii.

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poetry. A few days after the wedding, he was ordained minister of Kirkcudbright, in consequence of a presentation from the Crown which had been obtained for him by Lord Selkirk. He was a man of unaffected piety, and he had written sermons that would not have disgraced Hugh Blair himself.¹ But the parishioners refused to receive him as their minister, alleging that his physical defect rendered him incapable of performing the duties of his office in a satisfactory manner. After some vexatious litigation, the blind author wisely resigned his living and retired to Edinburgh, where he started a boarding-house for students. Four poetical pieces, which he had the good sense not to publish, show how deeply he resented the conduct of the men who had stirred up the people of Kirkcudbright against him. In 'Pistapolis,' the longest and pithiest of them, his enemies are made to walk in procession, headed by Rembombo, a town officer

'Whose muse, in sublime topographical lay,
Once painted the beauties of brave Galloway.'²

The herald is followed by two more influential but less honest men, Cebastus and Tom Crab, both magistrates of the burgh. Then come a dozen other worthies, all skilled in the art of detraction. There is one vacant place in the procession, a baker who had much distinguished himself as a persecutor having departed this life. In mourning 'R——s' exit the pious clergyman remarks :

'His conduct, when pois'd in the most equal scale,
Like his weights, in propriety never could fail ;
His face and his conscience in colour were one ;³
He knock'd, and all hell cried, "Anon, sir, anon !"'⁴

¹ Five volumes of unpublished sermons by the poet may be seen at Annan Mechanics' Institute.

² 'Rembombo,' or Alex. M'Knaught, was the author of a ballad describing the Stewarty.

³ R. had died of 'the black jaundice.'

⁴ 'Pistapolis' was published for the first time in *The Scottish Historical Review* for January, 1907. It is accompanied by some extraordinary notes by Blacklock on the social life of Kirkcudbright in 1762.

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In 1772 Blacklock, now a D.D. of Aberdeen University, published in Edinburgh 'A Poem occasioned by the Death of Lady Cunynghame of Livingstone.' The beautiful woman mourned in this carefully composed elegy was well-known in her day as one of 'The Three Graces,' her companions being Miss Peggy Cunynghame and Miss Jessy Gray. Dr. Blacklock's next publication was 'The Graham' (1774), a very poor heroic ballad, 'intended to promote the harmony between the inhabitants of England and Scotland.'

A few sentences written by Blacklock in 1786 are familiar to thousands who have no acquaintance with even his best odes. In a letter to a friend in Ayrshire, who had sent him a copy of the newly published *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, he thus expressed his high appreciation of Burns's work: 'There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems; a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased.'¹ It may not be strictly accurate to say that Burns abandoned his design of emigrating to the West Indies in consequence of the letter quoted; but beyond doubt, the applause of the venerable poet cheered him greatly. Shortly after the note came into his hands he visited Edinburgh, and during his stay there he received much kindness at the hands of 'The Doctor.' Though Blacklock was not slow to recognise Burns's fine qualities as a man, it is clear from a reference in a 'Letter' of his to Elizabeth Scott, poetess, which appears to have hitherto escaped notice, that he failed to appreciate the young poet's rustic familiarity of address:

'With joy to praise, with freedom blame,
To ca' folk by their Christian name,

¹ Letter to the Rev. George Lawrie, 4 Sept., 1786.

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To speak his mind, but fear or shame,
Was ay his fashion;
But virtue his eternal flame,
His ruling passion.¹

Dr. Blacklock was fortunate enough also to be able to help the youthful Walter Scott, who had already been pronounced by Mrs. Alison Cockburn, authoress of the more popular if less beautiful version of 'The Flowers of the Forest,' to be 'the most extraordinary genius of a boy.' 'The kind old man,' Scott said long after, 'opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser.'²

In July, 1791, Blacklock was seized with a feverish disorder, which soon terminated fatally. He was buried in the ground of St. Cuthbert's Church, and a monument with a Latin inscription by Dr. Beattie, author of 'The Minstrel,' was erected to his memory.

As the poetry of Dr. Blacklock abounds with references, seldom inappropriate, to the visible objects of nature, it greatly interested his contemporaries, who pointed in wonder to such lines as these :

'Ye vales, which to the raptur'd eye
Disclos'd the flowery pride of May;
Ye circling hills, whose summits high
Blush'd with the morning's earliest ray.'

Dr. Johnson declares that the blind poet's descriptive passages are but 'combinations of what he has remembered of the works of other writers who could see.'³ No doubt Dr. Blacklock's familiarity with the English poets accounts for his command of poetical language; but as Henry Mackenzie points out, this does not completely solve the difficulty, for 'it throws no light on his early

¹ 'A Letter from Thomas Blacklock to the Author respecting Burns,' in *Alonzo and Cora*, London, 1801.

² Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, 2nd edit., vol. i. p. 50.

³ Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Globe edit. p. 160).

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passion for reading poetry, and poetry of a kind, too, which lies very much within the province of sight; nor does it clearly trace the source of that pleasure which such reading evidently conveyed to his mind.’¹

The odes and elegies of Blacklock are not in themselves very remarkable. He displays little strength of imagination, and his imagery is wanting in freshness. Nevertheless his productions are worthy of perusal even yet, being characterised by fineness of feeling and smoothness of versification. He is happiest in elegiac poetry; and ‘Philanthes,’ a monody associated with Dumfries, ‘On the Death of Mr. Pope,’ and ‘An Epitaph on his Father’ may here be offered as favourable examples of his early work.

FROM PHILANTHES.

A Monody.

Inscribed to Miss D—y H—y.

(Edition of Poems, 1754, pp. 110-3. ‘D—y H—y,’ or Dorothy Hay, was a daughter of Dr. Hay, Dumfries, who died in 1752. The persons lamented are (1) Dorothy Hay’s sister, Mrs. Martin, who, as Ann Hay, had exchanged witty epistles in rhyme with Blacklock; (2) Robert Hill, a son of James Hill, Surgeon, drowned in the Nith at the age of eleven; (3) Dr. Hay.)

A swain, whose soul the tuneful nine inflame,
As to his western goal the sun declin’d,
Sung to the list’ning shades no common theme;
While the hoarse breathings of the hollow wind,
And deep resounding surge in concert join’d.
Deep was the surge, and deep the plaintive song,
While all the solemn scene in mute attention hung.

Nor thou, fair victim of so just a woe!
Tho’ still the pangs of nature swell thy heart,
Disdain the faithful muse; whose numbers flow
Sacred, alas! to sympathetic smart:
For in thy griefs the muses claim a part;
’Tis all they can, in social tears to mourn,
And deck with cypress wreaths thy dear paternal urn.

¹ *Life and Writings of Dr. Blacklock*, p. xvi.

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The swain began, while conscious echoes round
Protract to sadder length his doleful lay.
Roll on, ye streams, in cadence more profound :
Ye humid vapours, veil the face of day :
O'er all the mournful plain
Let night and sorrow reign :
For Pan indignant from his fields retires,
Once haunts of gay delight ;
Now every sense they fright,
Resound with shrieks of woe, and blaze with fun'ral fires.

II.

What tho' the radiant sun and clement sky
Alternate warmth and show'rs dispense below ;
Tho' spring presages to the careful eye,
That autumn copious with her fruits shall glow ?
For us in vain her choicest blessings flow :
To ease the bleeding heart, alas ! in vain
Rich swells the purple grape, or waves the golden grain.

What summer breeze, on swiftest pinions borne,
From fate's relentless hand its prey can save ?
What sun in death's dark regions wake the morn,
Or warm the cold recesses of the grave ?
Ah wretched man : whose breast scarce learns to heave
With kindling life : when, ere thy bud is blown,
Eternal winter breathes, and all its sweets are gone.

Thou all-enlivening flame, intensely bright !
Whose sacred beams illumine each wand'ring sphere,
That thro' high heav'n reflects thy trembling light,
Conducting round this globe the varied year ;
As thou pursu'st thy way,
Let this revolving day,
Deep-ting'd with conscious gloom, roll slow along :
In sable pomp array'd,
Let night diffuse her shade,
Nor sport the cheerless hind, nor chant the vocal throng.

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FROM 'ON THE DEATH OF MR. POPE.'

(This elegy was published in the 1746 edition, and was afterwards considerably improved. It is here quoted from the 1754 edition, pp. 134-5.)

Not the Sicilian¹ breath'd a sweeter song,
While ARETHUSA, charm'd and list'ning, hung ;
For whom each muse, from her dear seat retir'd,
His flocks protected, and himself inspired :
Nor he² who sung, while sorrow fill'd the plain,
How CYTHEREA mourn'd ADONIS slain ;
Nor TITYRUS,³ who, in immortal lays,
Taught MANTUA's echoes GALATEA's praise.
No more let MANTUA boast unrival'd fame ;
Thy WINDSOR now shall equal honours claim :
Eternal fragrance shall each breeze perfume,
And in each grove eternal verdure bloom.

Ye tuneful shepherds, and ye beauteous maids,
From fair LADONA's banks, and WINDSOR's shades,
Whose souls in transport melted at his song,
Soft as your sighs, and as your wishes strong ;
O come ! your copious annual tributes bring,
The full luxuriance of the rifled spring ;
Strip various nature of each fairest flow'r,
And on his tomb the gay profusion show'r.
Let long-liv'd pansies here their scents bestow,
The violets languish, and the roses glow ;
In yellow glory let the crocus shine,
Narcissus here his love-sick head recline ;
Here hyacinths in purple sweetness rise,
And tulips ting'd with beauty's fairest dyes.

AN EPITAPH ON HIS FATHER.

(From *Poems*, edit. 1793, p. 152. John Blacklock, the poet's father, was a brick-layer—first at Annan and afterwards at Dumfries—and was accidentally killed in 1740. His resting-place in the old Parish Churchyard of Dumfries is marked by a stone with an epitaph which includes an early version of the lines given below.—See M'Dowall's *Memorials of St. Michael's*, Edin. 1876, pp. 249-250. The inscription is now almost illegible, and should be renewed.)

Here drop, Benevolence, thy sacred tear,
A friend of human kind reposes here :

¹ Theocritus.

² Bion.

³ Virgil.

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A man, content himself,¹ and God, to know ;
A heart, with every virtue formed to glow :
Beneath each pressure, uniformly great ;
In life untainted, unsurpriz'd by fate :
Such, tho' obscur'd by various ills, he shone ;
Consol'd his neighbours' woes, and bore his own :
Heav'n saw, and snatch'd from Fortune's rage its prey,
To share the triumphs of eternal day.

Some of Blacklock's extant metrical compositions have never appeared in print. A collection of his writings presented to Annan Mechanics' Institute in 1898 by the late Mr. W. R. Duncan, Liverpool, a descendant of the poet's sister, contains a few productions which are still in the strictest sense 'MS. Poems.' The most interesting of them are a version of an 'Ode to Aurora, on Melissa's Birthday,' and 'A Poem from Eccles., chap. xii. verse 1,'—both of which may here be printed.

The 'Ode to Aurora' is the best of Blacklock's later poems. Henry Mackenzie, by whom it was first printed, says: 'It is a compliment and tribute of affection to the tender assiduity of an excellent wife, which I have not anywhere seen more happily conceived or more elegantly expressed.'² On the whole, the version of the ode published by Mackenzie is superior as poetry to the one now printed, but

'Emerge, in purest dress array'd'

is commonplace in comparison with

'Emerge, in flaming gold array'd.'

¹ *Itself* in the second quarto edition (1756). Corrected in the octavo edition of the same year. The line in which the word occurs originally ran—

'A mind content itself and God to know.'

When the poet substituted *man* for *mind* he forgot to make the additional change that was necessary.

² 'Some Account of the Life and Writings of Dr. Blacklock, p. xv.

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ODE TO AURORA.

On Melissa's Birth-Day.

(From the *Duncan MSS.* Compare with Mackenzie's copy in Blacklock's *Poems*, 1793, pp. 200-1.)

Of Time and Nature eldest born,
Emerge, thou rosy-finger'd morn ;
Emerge, in flaming gold array'd,
And chace from Heav'n night's envious shade,
That I once more may pleas'd survey 5
Restor'd Melissa's natal day.
Of Time and Nature eldest born,
Emerge, thou rosy-finger'd morn ;
In order at the eastern gate
The Hours to draw thy chariot wait ; 10
Whilst Zephyr on his balmy wings
Wide Nature's fragrant tribute brings,
With odours sweet to chear thy way,
And hail the dear revolving day.
But, as thou lead'st the radiant sphere, 15
That gilds the day and marks the year,
And as his bright'ning glories rise,
Diffusive thro' th' expanded skies,
Till, cloth'd in beams severely bright,
All heav'n's vast concave flames with light ; 20
So, while thro' life's protracted day
Melissa still pursues her way,
Her virtues with thy splendor vie
Still bright'ning to the mental eye ;
Tho' in a less conspicuous sphere 25
Long may they Strephon's prospect chear ;
So shall the Swain no more repine,
Blessed with those beams, tho' robb'd of thine.¹

¹The following notes indicate the variations in Mackenzie's version :

Line 3, 'Emerge, in purest dress array'd.'

„ 6, 'And hail Melissa's natal day.'

„ 12, 'Mild' instead of 'wide.'

Lines 13 and 14,

'With odours sweet to strew thy way,
And grace the bland, revolving day.'

Line 16, 'That gilds its birth.'

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Mr. Douglas J. Maclagan, referring to the 1781 Paraphrases of the Church of Scotland, writes: 'Blacklock is said to have contributed No. xvi. of that collection,'¹ and the Rev. James Mearns, in an article on the blind poet, says, "'In life's gay morn, etc.," is also ascribed to him.'² Hitherto, as these references show, the beautiful sixteenth paraphrase has not been assigned to Blacklock with full confidence. But the editor of this anthology having discovered among the *Duncan MSS.* the original of the piece, can now state as a fact that 'In life's gay morn' was composed by Blacklock. The familiar hymn consists of the first two stanzas of a 'Poem from Eccles.,' in a revised form. Probably the skilful pen that left its traces on the selected lines was that of John Logan or William Cameron.

A POEM FROM ECCLES., CHAP. XII. VERSE I.

(From the *Duncan MSS.*)

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

In life's gay dawn, when sprightly youth
With vital ardour glows,
When beauteous innocence and truth
Their loveliest charms disclose ;

Lines 17 and 18,

'And as his stronger glories rise,
Diffus'd around th' expanded skies.'

Line 19, 'Serenely' instead of 'severely.'

„ 24, 'Increasing to the mental eye.'

Last four lines,

'Tho' less conspicuous, not less dear,
Long may they Bion's prospect cheer ;
So shall his heart no more repine,
Bless'd with her rays, tho' robb'd of thine.'

¹ *The Scottish Paraphrases*, 1889, pp. 32-3.

² *Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology*, 1892, p. 144.

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Deep on thy spirit's ductile frame,
Ere wholly prepossess'd,
Be thy Creator's glorious name
And character impress'd.

For soon the shades of grief and pain
Shall tinge thy brightest days ;
And poignant ills, a nameless train,
Encompass all thy ways.
Soon shall thy heart the woes of age
In piercing groans deplore ;
And, with sad retrospect, presage
Returns of joy no more.

How curs'd the man, how deeply curs'd,
Whose conscience late awakes,
Whose mind, in vice and error nurs'd,
Her sov'reign good forsakes !
How fierce the hell within him burns !
How bitter his regret,
When fraught with pains, each hour returns
Portentous of his fate !

Parent of souls, whose breath divine
Each conscious power bestow'd !
Oh may those spirits which are thine
Still recognise their God !
Thus, in our being's vernal morn,
Th' exulting soul shall rise
Once more, to new existence born,
And rip'ning for the skies.

Thus, when our sorrows scarce begin,
Anticipating Heaven,
The sense of wrath, the guilt of sin,
Shall from our souls be driven.
Thus, basking in celestial beams,
The human flowers expand,
To suck th' eternal living streams
That flow at God's right hand.

Sweet blossoms of the fairest fruit
Which God e'er form'd below !
This is no clime for you to shoot,
Where storms incessant blow.

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With horror then from vice recoil,
Tho' on an idol's throne;
Your native air, your genial soil
Are found in Heaven alone.

There orbs more splendid, more sublime,
Shall lead th' effulgent year;
And nature in eternal prime
Thro' all her works appear.
Garden of God, whose vast extent
His radiant smile illumines;
Where life, by toils and years unspent,
In endless vigour blooms!

James Gatt or Gath, who, like Blacklock, was mentioned in the fourth chapter of this book as the author of some rhymes on the Rebellion of 1745, was born in the parish of Cullen, Banffshire, on 10th January, 1700. He studied at Cullen Parish School, King's College, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh University, and in 1730 became minister of Gretna, or Graitney. At the outset, his work as a clergyman was far from easy, for drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and yet worse offences were common among his people. Numerous entries in the Session records of Gretna Church show how vigorously and successfully Mr. Gatt grappled with the evils that prevailed. 'Penny Bridals' were put down, though not without much difficulty, and drinking at 'Lykewakes' was checked. Men who had been found guilty of fishing or shoeing horses on the Lord's Day were publicly rebuked in company with breakers of the seventh commandment. The strange sin of witchcraft once forced itself upon the notice of the minister and Kirk Session. In 1733 some of the parishioners were tried by the Session for using 'devils' charms.' As directed by a 'wise woman' named Isabel Pot, 'they burned Rowan-tree and Salt, they took three Locks of Francis Armstrong's hair, three pieces of his shirt, three roots of wormwood, three of mugwort, three pieces of Rowan-tree, and boiled all together; then they anointed his

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legs with the mixture, and essayed to put three sups in his mouth.¹

Four years after Gatt's ordination took place, his little church was burned. Some men shooting swallows in the churchyard, set fire to the heather with which the roof of the building was thatched, and soon the flames destroyed everything. Remembering such deeds, well might he exclaim :

‘ Arise ! O James, and Save from flames
Thy people that are Sinning ;
Angel ! declare me who they are,
It's time I were beginning ! ’²

In November 1745, a column of Prince Charles Edward's army passed through Gretna. It was not the custom of the Jacobites to shoot parish ministers, but Gatt imagining he was in danger, ‘retired’ to Bowness, leaving his wife—a daughter of the minister of Kirkpatrick-Fleming—behind. In his absence the Highland officers called at the Manse and asked a little refreshment. All the silver spoons in the parish were in Mrs. Gatt's keeping, and her heart trembled for their safety ; but she bade her visitors welcome and entertained them so well that the ‘rapacious tigers’³ departed without stealing even the minister's shining snuff box !

The rest of Gatt's long life was undisturbed by exciting events. He died on 31st October, 1787, and was buried at Gretna, where pleasing traditions of the good man linger yet.

Gatt was probably one of the most learned Scottish country ministers of his period. As is shown by his writings, which all remain unpublished, he had con-

¹ *Minutes of Kirk Session of Gretna*, 11 Feb. 1733.

² *MS. Diary*, 20th March, 1736. It is fair to mention that these lines were deleted by ‘James.’

³ ‘Sed rapaces illi tigres per totam regionem quam multa surripuerunt.’ *MS. Diary*, 21st Dec. 1745.

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siderable classical attainments; and according to the Rev. David Smith, minister of Morton from 1809 to 1838, and author of the only formal biography of Gatt, he 'joined to the knowledge of the ancient an intimate acquaintance with most of the modern European languages, and all the science of his time; and his knowledge of history was both extensive and profound.'¹

Most of the old scholar's MSS. were 'disposed of as memorandums to clerical friends.'² A few of them are now in the possession of the New College, Edinburgh, the librarian of which thus describes the MSS. in his charge: 'They are (in Latin) Lectures on Chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith (two parts); a theological, chronological, and historical essay, etc.'³ But the most interesting of the MSS. of Gatt, known by the present writer to be extant, are in the hands of the Kirk Session of Gretna. They include his Diary (1724-79); the Minutes of Gretna Kirk Session from 1730 to 1787; 'A Poem wrote in the Similitude of a Dream'; 'Paraphrasis in Proverbia Solomonis'; 'Miscellanea Metrica'; and a large collection of sermons. In addition to these works he has been credited with a version of 'Job' in Latin poetry;⁴ but the Rev. David Smith makes no reference to any attempt by Gatt to translate that book.

'A Poem wrote in the Similitude of a Dream' was composed in 1721. It deals with the history of Arianism,

¹ MS. *Short Memoir of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Rev. James Gath, Minister of Gratuey*, dated 1823 (lent by the Kirk Session of Gretna). Gatt's biographer was originally schoolmaster of Kirkpatrick-Fleming. He died in 1838, aged 76.

² MS. note on fly-leaf of Gatt's Diary, by David Greig (Glasgow), dated 1844.

³ Letter from the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Librarian of the New College, dated 11th June, 1907.

⁴ See notice of Gatt by the Rev. James Roddick, in *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. iv. p. 267. Roddick's statement that Gatt translated 'Job,' is repeated by Dr. Hew Scott in *Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticae*, part ii. p. 618.

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and affords as clear evidence of Gatt's orthodoxy as his best sermon on 'the three R's.' Most readers will be content with this brief extract from a dull poem of seventeen hundred lines :

'Sweet Christ, apply to Man thy Sovereign Plan:
 This soon the rage of Hell-fire Tongues would calm.
 Ungrateful Man! Look how he did pass by
 Once-glorious Sp'rits, and yet for thee did dy.
 Shal sinful dust the Great God-Man blaspheme,
 Who bought it dear? Shall it reproach his Name?
 Altho' he be a long forbearing God,
 He'll turn the Scepter to an Iron Rod.
 Read from Bæreshith¹ to the Canon's end,
 Escaped there one that durst with God contend?'

Gatt's Latin Version of the *Proverbs of Solomon*—his own favourite among his works—was intended to be used as a text-book in schools. It will be sufficient to quote from it his paraphrase of *Proverbs*, iii. 13, ('O happy is the man who hears, etc.')

Spes fovens certas, ideo dolores
 Pelle mordaces: Sapientiæque
 Maximo nisu potius beate
 Velificare.

Jugiter namque hinc velut ex perenni
 Fonte dimanant bona Larga Longè
 Auro & argento, potiora ab omni
 Fæce recoctis.

Suppetit nil ei Simile aut Secundum
 Non nitor gemmæ rutilæve gazæ
 Quæ volant, cursu celeri, citatis
 Temporis alis.

Compotes qui sunt tamen hujus omni ex
 Parte felices; tenet hæcce palmâ
 Dexterâ vitam, brevis arcta quam non
 Claustra cœrcent

¹The first book in the Hebrew Canon of Scripture was the same as our book *Genesis*, and was called by a title consisting of its opening word 'Bæreshith' ('In the beginning').

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Temporis : Lætās et opes Sinistrā
Nescias ævo minuique fasces,
Flore vernantes roseo, nec aufert
Bruma virorem

Ulla ridentem : Locuplete cuncti
Qui colunt illam reditu beantur
Gaudii fructus hilares repasti ;
Prata redundant.

Omnibus Sanctis animi voluptas,
Qui vias ejus pede metiuntur
Sedulo, et tandem sine fine pacis
Limina tangent.

Miscellanea Metrica contains short Latin poems mostly written, between 1740 and 1763, at Gretna—‘the poorest place in all Scotland,’ as the poet in a moment of depression called it. In a piece dated 1741, he describes the pleasing if unromantic scenery of his Border parish :

DELICIÆ GRATINIENSES.

(From the original MS. Now published for the first time.)

Arx nova Gratiniæ Jonstonia cincta refulget
Arboribus ; vestit fertilis arva Ceres.
Phœnici similis post tetra incendia, sacra
Ædes visa procul candida tota micat.
Pars Orientalis munitur flumine Sarcā
Cujus aquæ tenues Anglica prata rigant.
Murmure submisso Ripam transire Colurnam,
Gratiniæ ac veteris Lambere gestit agros.
Circuitu molli Sarkbrigam amplectitur atque
Fordam Haii ; hinc Lymphas tu Vadilona bibis,
Lonwathiæ, Studiis operam navare Gatheus
Nititur et varias fundere sæpe preces.
Tædia solatur Scribendo sive Legendo ;
Pauca palimpsesto vel relinenda notat,
Consilio hoc saltem ut meditamina vana repellat
Et venerabundus Numina rite colat.
In freta Solvæi, nitidis se argenteus undis
Cirtela advolvit, flumina Lenta trahens.
Scalinam, Rigam, Rubrum Fanumque Susurro
Demulcens, Segetes Luxuriare facit.

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Barchia, Bruva, viris, Lea, Tordocha floret honestis:
Auras quam Salubres villula quæque capit?
Hinc mare vicinum diversis piscibus implet
Retia: et hinc tondent pascua Læta greges.
Grina Vostilla ac Hopsia, Blattia silva,
Reburna, ac Dumus, Neutona, Ripa, Palus!
Gramina nec glebæ desunt fruges nec ericæ;
Et nivei Lactis copia Larga fluit:
Roscida mella etiam promanant divite venâ;
Vobis nil præter corda nova deest.
Hocce Deum exoscit, nugas ignobilis otî
Qui sequitur Pastor vos vehementer amans.

(*Translation by Mr. Duncan.*)

THE DELIGHTS OF GRETNA.

The new mansion of the Johnstones at Gretna glitters girt with trees: fertile Ceres clothes the fields. Like the Phoenix after foul fire, the Sacred House gleams all white seen from afar. The eastern side is guarded by the river Sark, whose slender stream waters the English meadows. With gentle murmur it longs to cross Hazelbank and to lave the fields of Old Graitney. With gentle embrace it enfolds Sarkbrig and Hayford: from this point thou, Vadilona, dost drink its limpid stream. At Lonwath Gatt eagerly strives to devote himself to study, and often to pour forth his varied prayers. His weariness he relieves by writing or reading, or notes a few thoughts to be unsealed from parchment, with the aim that at least he may dispel vain thoughts and reverently with due observance worship Heaven.

To the Solway Firth the silver Kirtle rolls with glistening waves, stretching out its slow flowing waters; caressing Scales and Rigg and Redkirk with its gentle whisper it renders their cornlands luxuriant. Baurch and Brow and Lea and Torduff flourish with men of worth. Does every country house enjoy breezes so health-giving? On the one hand the neighbouring sea fills the nets with divers fishes, on the other the flocks crop the joyful pasture lands—Green Westhill and Housey, Blatwood, Raeburnfoot, Milligan Bush, Aitchison Bank, Newton and Westgill.¹ Neither do grasses fail the soil nor fruits the heath, and generous abundance of snow-white milk flows forth. Dewy honey, too, drips from a rich vein. Nothing is lacking to you but the new heart, and this your Pastor who dearly loves you, and who pursues the trifles of an obscure ease, asks from God.

¹ Such are the place names assigned on the margin of the manuscript.

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William Julius Mickle, translator of the *Lusiad* of Camoens, is one of the poets belonging to the dull period between Gray and Cowper who produced work of appreciable merit. No critic of the present time would say with Dr. Robert Anderson that 'his versification unites the freedom of Dryden with the force and harmony of Pope.'¹ But it must be evident to all competent judges that he had a fluent pen and no inconsiderable taste and fancy. Sir Walter Scott is but just to a favourite poet of his youth when he observes that Mickle 'with a vein of great facility united a power of verbal melody which might have been envied by bards of much greater renown.'²

Mickle was born on 28th September, 1735, at Langholm, of which his father was minister. At a very early age he showed an attachment to the fine scenery of his native dale, and a predilection for poetry. In an unfinished epistle to a friend, quoted by his biographer Sim, he describes his wanderings in boyhood by the banks of the 'christalline' Esk, and tells how powerfully he was affected when, at the age of seven, he first heard Ovid read in Langholm Grammar-school. In 1746 Mickle's father was granted a colleague, and obtained permission to reside in Edinburgh. About two years after his removal to that city he purchased a brewery from the representatives of a brother-in-law, and proceeded to carry on the business. The lad, taken from the High School of Edinburgh, where he had been sent to finish his education, was placed in the brewery, which ultimately became his own property. Though attentive to business young Mickle never allowed it to absorb all his mental energy. It is recorded that whilst yet in his teens he wrote odes and tragedies, and also part of an epic. A piece entitled 'Knowledge,' composed in 1752, was printed in separate form, and afterwards in Donaldson's

¹ *The Works of the British Poets* (1794), vol. ii. p. 635.

² *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. 'Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry.'

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Collection; and in 1762 he issued through a London publisher a laboured poem on 'Providence.'

Becoming bankrupt and dreading imprisonment for debt, Mickle, in 1763, left his home privately and fled to London, where he had a hard struggle to obtain bread. A welcome change in his fortune came in 1765, when he was appointed a corrector to the Clarendon Press, Oxford. In 1766 he published a beautiful elegiac ode entitled 'Pollio,' and in 1767 'The Concubine,' afterwards called 'Syr Martyn.' These poems were followed by two pamphlets, of no great weight, in defence of Christianity.

At the age of seventeen Mickle had read a French translation of the *Lusiad*, and he had long set his mind upon executing an English version. Having at last acquired a sufficiently accurate knowledge of the Portuguese language, he now commenced the great work of his life. A translation of part of the fifth book of the *Lusiad* was published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1771, and a few months later the whole of the first book appeared. Both specimens were so favourably criticised that he felt justified in giving up his situation at Oxford and retiring to Forest Hill, there to devote himself to his task. Among the eminent men who showed an interest in his work was Dr. Samuel Johnson, who told him in 1772 that 'about twenty years before that time, he himself had a design to translate the *Lusiad*, of the merit of which he spoke highly, but had been prevented by a number of other engagements.'¹ Mickle's translation, which appeared in its complete form in 1776, gained for him a celebrity that was not confined to England. Visiting Portugal in 1779 in the capacity of secretary to his friend Commodore Johnstone, he was at once astonished and gratified to find how much importance was attached to his labours by the countrymen of Camoens.

In 1781 Mickle published 'Almada Hill,' a poem written during his stay in Portugal, and in 1784 he contributed to Evans's collection of ballads 'Cumnor

¹ *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (Globe edit.), p. 621.

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Hall,' the famous lament for Amy Robsart which suggested to Sir Walter Scott the subject of *Kenilworth*. His last production was 'Eskdale Braes,' a lyric inspired by a true love of the Border scenery with which he was familiar in childhood. He died at Forest Hill on 25th October, 1788, leaving a widow and one son. An edition of his poems, which had very many typographical errors, was published by subscription in quarto in 1794, and in 1806 it was followed by an accurate edition, with a memoir by the Rev. John Sim.

Mickle's principal work has often been condemned as an untrustworthy rendering of the original; and certainly he took liberties with Camoens which no translator would dare to take with Virgil or Dante. It is fair, however, to point out that he did not offer his *Lusiad* to the public as a literal translation, but rather as a version. 'It was not,' he says, 'to gratify the dull few whose greatest pleasure in reading a translation is to see what the author exactly says—it was to give a poem that might live in the English language—which was the aim of the translator.' The merits and defects of the work viewed simply as a poetical performance are exemplified by the rendering of a passage in which Celestial Venus, ever watchful of Gama's safety, is represented as stilling a tempest by the ministry of her nymphs.

FROM 'THE LUSIAD.'

(Oxford, 1776, pp. 265-6.)

He spoke; redoubled rage the mingled blasts;
Through the torn cordage and the shatter'd masts
The winds loud whistled, fiercer lightnings blazed,
And louder roars the doubled thunders raised,
The sky and ocean blending, each on fire,
Seem'd as all Nature struggled to expire.
When now the silver star of Love appear'd,¹
Bright in her east her radiant front she rear'd;

¹The appearance of the star of Venus through the storm is finely imagined.

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Fair through the horrid storm the gentle ray
Announced the promise of the cheerful day ;
From her bright throne Celestial Love beheld
The tempest burn, and blast on blast impell'd :
'And must the furious Dæmon still,' she cries,
'Still urge his rage, nor all the past suffice !
Yet as the past, shall all his rage be vain——'
She spoke, and darted to the roaring main ;
Her lovely nymphs she calls, the nymphs obey,
Her nymphs the Virtues who confess her sway ;
Round every brow she bids the rose-buds twine,
And every flower adown the locks to shine,
The snow-white lily and the laurel green,
And pink and yellow as at strife be seen.
Instant amid their golden ringlets strove
Each flowret planted by the hand of Love ;
At strife, who first th' enamour'd Powers to gain,
Who rule the tempests and the waves restrain :
Bright as a starry band the Nereids shone,
Instant old Eolus' sons their presence own ;
The winds die faintly, and in softest sighs
Each at his Fair one's feet desponding lies.
The bright Orithia, threatening, sternly chides
The furious Boreas, and his faith derides ;
The furious Boreas owns her powerful bands :
Fair Galatea, with a smile commands
The raging Notus, for his love, how true,
His fervent passion and his faith she knew.
Thus every nymph her various Lover chides ;
The silent winds are fetter'd by their brides ;
And to the Goddess of Celestial loves,
Mild as her look, and gentle as her doves
In flowery bands are brought. Their amorous flame
The Queen approves, 'And ever burn the same,'
She cries, and joyful on the Nymphs' fair hands,
Th' Eolian race receive the Queen's commands,
And vow, that henceforth her Armada's sails
Should gently swell with fair propitious gales.

'Syr Martyn,' the longest of Mickle's original poems, unsuccessful though it may be as an imitation of Spenser, merits commendation in one respect—it is pervaded by an intense love of nature. The line about the willows in

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the following extract reveals a power of observation for which Mickle has never got due credit :

‘And bright behind the Cambrian mountains hore
Flames the red beam ; while on the distant East
Led by her starre, the horned moone looks o’er
The bending forest, and with rays increast
Ascends ; while trembling on the dappled West
The purple radiance shifts, and dies away ;
The willows with a deeper green imprest
Nod o’er the brooks ; the brooks with gleamy ray
Glide on, and holy Peace assumes her woodland sway.’

Being associated with one of the greatest romances in the English language ‘Cumnor Hall’ is better known to most readers than any other undisputed poem of Mickle’s. During his apprenticeship in Edinburgh, Walter Scott frequently recited to companions verses of the long and rather feeble ballad ; and we learn from *Kenilworth* that the force of the ‘enchantment’ which it had for his youthful ear was never entirely spent. The opening stanza especially always appealed to his imagination :

‘The dews of summer nighte did falle,
The moone (sweete regente of the skye)
Silver’d the walles of Cumnor Halle,
And manye an oake that grewe therebye.’¹

Of more intrinsic value than ‘Cumnor Hall’ is the lyric entitled ‘Eskdale Braes,’ which was composed in September 1788—but a few weeks before the author’s death. It has been well criticised by Professor Veitch in these words : ‘This song is somewhat laboured, and deficient in ease of turn ; but the fusion of the love emotion with the aspects of nature, their mutual colouring and transfiguration, strongly forecast the peculiar character of the nineteenth century love lyrics of Scotland.’²

¹ Evans’s *Old Ballads : Historical and Narrative*, 1784, vol. iv. p. 130.

² *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border*, 1878, p. 471.

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ESKDALE BRAES.

(From Sim's edition of *Mickle's Poems*, pp. 123-5.)

By the banks of the crystal-stream'd Esk,
Where the Wauchope her yellow wave joins,
Where the lambkins on sunny braes bask,
And wild woodbine the shepherd's bower twines,

Maria, disconsolate maid !
Oft sigh'd the still noon-tide away,
Or by moonlight all desolate stray'd,
While woeful she tun'd her love-lay :

Ah, no more from the banks of the Ewes
My shepherd comes cheerly along,
Broomholm and the Deansbanks refuse
To echo the plaints of his song :

No more from the echoes of Ewes,
His dog fondly barking I hear ;
No more the tir'd lark he pursues,
And tells me his master draws near.

Ah, woe to the wars, and the pride,
Thy heroes, O Esk, could display,
When with laurels they planted thy side,
From France and from Spain borne away.

Oh, why did their honours decoy
My poor shepherd lad from the shore ;
Ambition bewitch'd the vain boy,
And oceans between us now roar.

Ah, methinks his pale corse floating by,
I behold on the rude billows tost ;
Unburied his scatter'd bones lie,
Lie bleaching on some desert coast !

By this stream and the May-blossom'd thorn,
That first heard his love-tale, and his vows,
My pale ghost shall wander forlorn,
And the willow shall weep o'er my brows.

With the ghosts of the Waas will I wail,¹
In Warblaw woods join the sad throng,

¹ 'The ghosts of the Waas' were spectres that haunted the ruins of Wauchope Castle, or 'the waas' (walls).

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To *Hallow E'en's* blast tell my tale,
As the spectres, ungrav'd, glide along.
Still the Ewes rolls her paly blue stream,
Old Esk still his crystal tide pours,
Still golden the Wauchope waves gleam,
And still green, oh Broomholm, are thy bowers !
No : blasted they seem to my view,
The rivers in red floods combine ;
The turtles their widow'd notes coo,
And mix their sad ditties with mine !
Discolour'd in sorrow's dim shade,
All nature seems with me to mourn,—
Strait the village-bells merrily play'd,
And announc'd her dear Jamie's return.
The woodlands all May-blown appear,
The silver streams murmur new charms,
As, smiling, her Jamie drew near,
And all eager sprung into her arms.

Sim included in his edition of *Mickle* 'There's nae Luck about the House,' a song of which he had found among the poet's MSS. not only the copy printed, but what appeared to be the original draft. The lyric was well-known long before the appearance of Sim's volume, having been printed in Herd's *Scottish Songs* (1776), *The Nightingale* (1778), *The Charmer* (1782) and other collections. Burns in one of his notes on Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* says the song came on the streets as a ballad, about 1771 or 1772, and conjectures that it was composed shortly before. Most probably he had not seen it in Herd's collection. A version of the song in which the hero is called Donald—not Colin—was sung at Ranelagh in 1777.¹

Mickle's claim to the authorship of the lyric was undisputed till 1810, when R. H. Cromek, in *Select Scottish Songs*, advanced the theory that the real author of 'There's

¹This fact appears to have escaped the notice of previous writers on the history of the song. The version referred to will be found in Ruddiman's *The Weekly Magazine*, 1777, p. 95.

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nae Luck' was Jean Adam, a Cartsydyke schoolmistress, who published a volume of verse in 1734 and died in 1765. Motherwell and David Laing both felt inclined to support Miss Adam's claim, which in later days was advocated by Alexander Rodger and Sarah Tytler. Miss Tytler's remarks called forth a reply by Mickle's grandson, Charles Mickle, which remains the weightiest contribution yet made to the controversy.¹

It will be seen that several able writers give the credit of the authorship of 'There's nae Luck' to Jean Adam. The external evidence in her favour, however, is weak, amounting merely to this—that a Mrs. Fullarton affirmed she had heard Miss Adam repeat the song as her own, and that Mrs. Crawford of Ratho House, a daughter of Mrs. Fullarton, had 'always heard it spoken of as her composition by those she depended much upon.'² Cromek, we must remember, did not collect his evidence till 1810. Mrs. Fullarton, giving her testimony forty-five years after Jean's death, may have blundered sadly. The 'very old lady' may have confused some piece by her schoolmistress on a 'Sailor's Return' with the famous song. As regards Mrs. Crawford's testimony—it is not sufficiently explicit to be of any value.

Most writers who attribute the song to Jean Adam lay stress on the internal evidence. Alexander Rodger says: 'It is a composition of Cartsydyke; it is in the Cartsydyke dialect; it narrates an incident that occurred in Cartsydyke; it describes the scenery of Cartsydyke.'³ Miss Tytler adds that the 'very name of the hero' is identified with the west coast of Scotland, and that Mickle, 'a native of Langholm, in the *inland* county of Dumfries,' apparently never visited Greenock.⁴

¹ 'There's nae Luck about the House,' in *The Athenæum* of 27th January, 1877.

² Cromek's *Select Scottish Songs*, London, 1810, vol. i. p. 192.

³ *Jean Adam of Cartsydyke*, Greenock, 1866, p. 24.

⁴ *The Songstresses of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 43.

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It is evident that the author of the song had some interest in the sea and in ships. There is nothing in the verses, however, to connect him or her with Greenock or any port in particular. And Jean Adam's admitted pieces do not afford proof that she had the peculiar gift required for the production of a song in the vernacular, or indeed that she had any poetical skill whatever. Referring to the name of the hero of the ballad, Mr. C. Mickle shows that his grandfather had a friend called 'Colin.'¹ But in truth the name need not arrest attention, for it is a favourite one with the eighteenth-century lyrists. In a famous collection published in 1726 there is a song entitled 'Colin's Complaint,'² and Blacklock, who like Mickle belonged to Dumfriesshire, composed a humorous ditty commencing 'One night as young Colin lay musing in bed.'

The evidence in support of Mickle's claim, if not conclusive, is strong. Certainly an author may copy verses not his own and keep them among his papers. If, however, he is as methodical as Mickle undoubtedly was, he is hardly likely to have among his original poems two copies of a song by another person—one of them with erasures and corrections. A point which obviously has an important bearing on the question whether Mickle composed the song is the age of the earlier MS. discovered by Sim. That the 'first sketch' belongs to a date much anterior to 1772, when the piece became popular as a street ballad, is made probable by the fact that it is better as a specimen of caligraphy than anything produced by Mickle in his later days. The Rev. J. Sim states that soon after 1760 'his misfortunes in trade, and his consequent depression in spirits, very much affected his handwriting.' Presumptive evidence that 'There's nae Luck' was composed by Mickle about 1760 is also furnished by the watermark of the paper on which the sketch is written. This mark, Mr. Charles Mickle states, is the same as that borne by the paper of a letter

¹ *The Athenæum*, 27 Jan., 1877. ² *The Hive*, vol. i. p. 47.

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‘written by W. J. Mickle in Edinburgh not later than 1760.’

If the testimony of Mrs. Mickle may be accepted, our author expressly claimed the poem as his own. When first questioned by Sim regarding it she showed some hesitancy, but as she was taken by surprise and was at the time suffering from paralysis this need not excite suspicion. Subsequently she stated that her husband ‘gave her the ballad as his own composition, and explained to her the Scottish words and phrases.’¹ To satisfy her interrogator that she was not mistaken as to the identity of the song, Mrs. Mickle repeated ‘There’s nae Luck,’ omitting, however, eight lines which Sim in his copy had distinguished as the work of Mickle’s relative, James Beattie, author of ‘The Minstrel.’

THERE’S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

(From *The Poetical Works of William Julius Mickle*, Sim’s edit., pp. 121-3.)

And are you sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he’s weel?
Is this a time to think of wark!
Mak haste, lay by your wheel;
Is this the time to spin a thread
When Colin’s at the door!
Reach me my cloak, I’ll to the quay
And see him come ashore.

For there’s nae luck about the house,
There is nae luck at aw;
There’s little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman’s awa.

And gie to me my bigonet,²
My bishop’s satin gown;
For I maun tell the bailie’s wife
That Colin’s come to town.

¹ Letter from J. Sim to R. H. Cromek, dated 14 April, 1810, in Cromek’s *Select Scottish Songs*, vol. i. p. 197.

² bigonet—a linen cap or coif.

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My Turkey slippers maun gae on,
My stockings pearly blue ;
'Tis aw to pleasure my gudeman,
For he's baith leel and true.
For there's nae luck, &c.

Rise, lass, and mak a clean fireside,
Put on the muckle pot,
Gie little Kate her button gown,
And Jock his Sunday coat ;
And mak their shoon as black as slaes,
Their hose as white as snaw,
It's aw to please my ain gudeman,
For he's been lang awa.
For there's nae, &c.

There's twa fat hens up' the bauk,¹
Been fed this month and mair ;
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare ;
And mak the table neat and clean,
Let everything look braw,
For wha can tell how Colin fared
When he was far awa.
Ah, there's nae, &c.

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like cauler air,
His very foot has music in't
As he comes up the stair !
And shall I see his face again,
And shall I hear him speak !
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet.
For there's nae, &c.

' The caul blasts of the winter wind,
That thrilled through my heart,
They're aw blawn by, I ha'e him safe,
Till death we'll never part :
But why should I of parting tauk,
It may be far awa ;

¹ bauk—beam, roost.

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The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw.'¹

For there's nae luck, &c.

If Colin's weel, and weel content,
I ha'e nae mair to crave,
And gin I live to keep him sae,
I'm blest aboon the lave.
And shall I see his face again,
And shall I hear him speak!
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet.

For there's nae, etc.

That Mickle's association with Eskdale had lent a new glory to the district was realised by Thomas Telford, engineer and poet, a native of Westerkirk, who, addressing the river with which he was familiar in boyhood, thus wrote :

'The Muses, too, from Thames' green Margin came,
And on thy Banks have nurs'd young Sons of Fame;
With care they form'd thy Armstrong's rising Soul,
And bade his Name resound from Pole to Pole;
Resolv'd their fav'rite Pope should live again,
They gave thy Mickle all his tuneful Strain,
Taught him to roll the Tide of Verse along,
And Gama's deeds immortalize in Song.'²

The author of these lines was the son of John Telford, Glendinning, 'an unblameable shepherd,'³ and was born

¹'The lines inclosed in inverted commas were inserted by Dr. James Beattie' (Sim).

²'Eskdale; a Descriptive Poem,' p. 15. Dr. John Armstrong, author of *The Art of Preserving Health*, whose name is linked by Telford with that of Mickle, was the son of the Rev. Robert Armstrong, minister of Castleton, Roxburghshire.

³The Shepherd's tombstone in Westerkirk Churchyard bears this inscription: 'In Memory of John Telford, who after living 33 years an unblameable Shepherd, died at Glendinning, November, 1757,' an epitaph by Thomas Telford, which, as his biographer Smiles remarks, might have been written by Wordsworth himself.

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on 9th August, 1757. After learning the trade of stonemason at Langholm he proceeded to London, where Sir William Chambers employed him in the building of Somerset House. In 1787 Telford removed to Shrewsbury, having been appointed surveyor of public works for the county of Salop. He soon gained a wide reputation for engineering skill, and numerous undertakings of high importance were entrusted to him. The Caledonian Canal, the Menai Suspension Bridge, and the Gotha Canal in Sweden are the chief monuments of his fame. He died unmarried on 2nd September, 1834, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

‘Eskdale,’ the only poem by Telford which is remembered, was first published at Shrewsbury, in 1795. Perhaps the most interesting lines contained in it are the following :

‘As o’er the Land improving Arts extend,
Rejoicing Eskdale feels their powers descend.
Stript of her cumbrous load, her Mountains rise,
While at their feet the peopled Valley lies :
The less’ning Woods, that dark and dismal frown’d,
Now spread their shelter, not their gloom, around :
And where the boggy Fen neglected lay,
Smile the white Cottage and the Village gay.

VI

BURNS AND OTHER POETS IN THE VERNACULAR

IF Lower Nithsdale has for every Scotsman an almost unique interest it is on account of the association of the district with Robert Burns. In the neighbourhood of Dumfries, as in the vicinity of Ayr,—

‘His hand
Guides every plough :
He sits beside each ingle-nook ;
His voice is in each rushing brook,
Each rustling bough.’¹

Burns came, on 13th June, 1788, to reside at Ellisland, a farm belonging to Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, in the parish of Dunscore, and without delay set about building a new steading, his wife meanwhile remaining in Ayrshire. During the erection of his own house he lived in a hut near ‘The Isle,’ an ivy-mantled keep on the banks of the Nith. In the summer of 1788 the surroundings of the poet were cheerless, as the ‘Epistle to Hugh Parker’ shows ; but the Ayrshire girl he had lately made his wife was constantly in his mind, and inspired by her he wrote such lyrics as ‘Of a’ the airts the wind can blaw’ and ‘O, were I on Parnassus Hill.’ In December his wife removed to Dunscore, and he secured for her temporary accommodation, his farmhouse not being yet ready. About this time he wrote ‘I hae a wife o’ my ain’ and ‘Auld Lang Syne.’

¹ Longfellow’s *Robert Burns*.

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By the interest of Lord Glencairn—his ‘dearest patron and benefactor’—Burns had already obtained a place in the Excise. In the summer of 1789 he resolved to take up his gaugership and convert his holding into a dairy farm, considering that while Jean with some assistance managed the cows, he might attend to the Excise business. On the 10th of August, a little after the completion of ‘The Kirk’s Alarm,’ he learned from Graham of Fintry that he had been appointed excise officer for the district in which Ellisland is situated. The district embraced no fewer than ten parishes, and thus ‘the king’s poor blackguard slave,’ as Burns called himself, was sadly overworked; but though his duties were as arduous as they were distasteful, he always discharged them with exemplary faithfulness. His affecting lyric ‘To Mary in Heaven’ was composed soon after he received the intimation of his appointment as an excise officer. ‘The Five Carlins,’ an election ballad; ‘The Wounded Hare,’ which effectively illustrates Burns’s tenderness for animals; and one of his finest songs, ‘Tam Glen,’ were also written in 1789.

At Ellisland, Burns had for a neighbour Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, who was well known as an antiquary. Riddell was the proprietor of a small estate with a name that recalled the time when the monks of Melrose owned land in Nithsdale. To the grounds of ‘Friars’ Carse’ Burns was at once freely admitted, and before long he found himself an honoured guest at the mansion-house. It was there that he became acquainted with the accomplished Maria Woodley, the wife of Glenriddell’s brother Walter, and with Miss Deborah Davies, the heroine of his song :

‘Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wast thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.’

He was also introduced at Friars’ Carse to Francis Grose, whose *Antiquities of England and Wales* had

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gained for him a high reputation. Asked by Burns to make a drawing of Alloway Kirk for *The Antiquities of Scotland*, then in preparation, Grose at once consented on condition that the poet should furnish him with a witch story to be inserted along with the sketch. This was the occasion of 'Tam o' Shanter,' which is generally regarded as Burns's masterpiece. The poem appeared in *The Antiquities of Scotland*, with an acknowledgment of Grose's indebtedness to Mr. Robert Burns for 'the pretty tale annexed to Alloway church.'¹

'The Whistle,' a performance of which Burns was especially proud, is yet more closely associated with Friars' Carse than the witch tale. On 16th October, 1789, Riddell submitted to an amicable competition between Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwelton, Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch, and himself a whistle which had been won by a common ancestor in a Bacchanalian contest with a boastful Dane. The three lairds all acquitted themselves creditably, but at length the prize was gained by Fergusson, whose great achievement was celebrated by Burns in a long poem. The judge in the competition, John M'Murdo, Drumlanrig, Chamberlain to the Duke of Queensberry, was already one of the Bard's warmest friends. Burns frequently visited Drumlanrig, and sometimes whilst there got 'a balloon waft up Parnassus.'² M'Murdo's daughter Jean is painted in the unsuitable 'dress and character of a cottager' in 'Bonie Jean,' while his daughter Philadelphia is the subject of 'Phillis the Fair' and 'Adown winding Nith I did wander.'

While residing at Ellisland, Burns attended Dunscore Church, the minister of which was the Rev. Joseph Kirkpatrick, a man of rare benevolence, though a Calvinist as uncompromising as 'Rumble John' himself. The kirk was a plain little building, dating back to 1649. It was taken down in 1823 to make room for the present building—the church referred to by the Sage of Craigen-

¹ *The Antiquities of Scotland* (1791), vol. i. Introduction, xxi.

² Letter to Mrs. M'Murdo, 2nd May, 1789.

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puttock when he said to Emerson : ' Christ died on the tree : that built Dunscore kirk yonder : that brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence.'¹

Finding it impossible to make the farm pay, Burns in the summer of 1791 determined to give it up, and trust for support solely to his income from the Excise. His interest having suffered by the death of Glencairn, the hopes of a supervisorship in which he had indulged were not realised; but he obtained an appointment as an ordinary exciseman in Dumfries at the increased salary of £70 per annum. His lease having been cancelled and his stock sold, Burns in December removed to the county town, and 'the golden days of Ellisland' were ended.

Dumfries, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, was a Tory town, vehemently opposed to parliamentary reform. Burns, though he spoke with respect of the Stuarts and had written Jacobite songs, was constitutionally an advanced Whig. The violence of Dumfries Toryism was provocative of opposition; and, being a man of sensitive honesty, the poet gave an even exaggerated expression to his unpopular opinions. He loudly proclaimed his sympathy with the revolutionary Liberalism of France; and consequently, in the excited state of public feeling he was set down as of doubtful loyalty. Some report as to Burns's political heterodoxy having reached the Board of Excise, he was 'made the subject of their animadversions.'² No doubt the Board would have been quite justified in giving him a friendly hint to be more guarded in his utterances; but if, as the immortal singer affirms, they informed him that 'his business was to act, *not to think*,' they were guilty of an impertinence which nothing could excuse. In 1795, when a French invasion of Britain seemed imminent, Burns joined a Volunteer Company raised in Dumfries by Colonel De Peyster of Mavis Grove, thus giving a satisfactory proof of his loyalty. Not only did he

¹ Emerson's *Works* (Bohn), vol. ii. p. 8.

² Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 5th January, 1793.

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become a volunteer, but he wrote for the corps one of the finest patriotic songs in the language—‘Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?’

Woodley Park, the property and residence of Glenriddell's brother Walter, was situated near Dumfries, and soon it had for Burns as many associations as Friars' Carse.¹ Riddell and his wife treated him as their equal in society, and showed him every attention which the most delicate politeness could suggest. Probably his conversational gifts were never displayed to greater advantage than at the table of the proprietor of Woodley Park.

About the same distance from Dumfries as Woodley Park, though in a different direction, was Kemmishall, a farm tenanted by William Lorimer, with whom Burns, whilst still at Ellisland, had formed an intimacy. Lorimer was the father of ‘Chloris,’ the heroine of ‘Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,’ ‘Craigieburn Wood,’ and many other songs. The bard was anxious that the ‘artless lassie’ should marry his friend and brother-officer John Gillespie, who had fallen in love with her. It would have been well for ‘Chloris’ if she had taken the advice of Burns, but, disappointing Gillespie, she gave her hand to a dissipated farmer named Whelpdale, and a life of misery was the result. She lies at rest in Preston Street Cemetery, Edinburgh, and her grave is marked by a fine Celtic cross, erected under the auspices of the Ninety Burns Club in 1901.

Towards the close of 1795 Burns had an attack of rheumatic fever, and early in the following year, after a slight recovery, had a relapse. About the beginning of July he was removed to Brow, in the parish of Ruthwell, sea-bathing having been recommended by his medical adviser. When rapidly approaching death he spent an afternoon at Ruthwell Manse. The rays of the sun poured into the room where he sat, and the minister's

¹The house, now called Goldielea, is 4 miles south-west of Dumfries.

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daughter, Miss Craig,¹ afterwards the wife of Dr. Henry Duncan, fearing that the light might be too strong for him, rose to draw down the window-blind. 'I thank you for your attention,' said Burns, 'but don't hide the sun; he will not shine long for me.' The end came on 21st July, 1796; and four days later the sun shone peacefully on his grave in St. Michael's Churchyard.

To follow out the plan of this book, it will be necessary to give examples even of verse so familiar as that of Burns. The few poems referable to the last eight years of his life may here be represented by 'The Whistle,' 'A Vision,' and 'The Wounded Hare,' works which, unlike the more remarkable 'Tam o' Shanter' and 'To Mary in Heaven,' relate to Dumfriesshire subjects. The productions of his later years are mostly songs, for his duties as an excise officer were too exacting to leave him much time for literary toil, and a desire to help James Johnson and George Thomson led him to devote the greater part of his scanty leisure to the composition of purely lyrical verse. In Dumfries alone he penned nearly a hundred songs, and three of these fine lyrics may be selected for the enrichment of this anthology.

THE WHISTLE—A BALLAD.

I sing of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish King,
And long with his Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda, still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—

¹Miss Craig was a grand-niece of James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*. 'The poet's sister, Mary Thomson, married Robert Craig of Edinburgh. They had two sons—James, the celebrated architect of some parts of the New Town of Edinburgh, and the Rev. John Craig, who became minister of Ruthwell, and whose daughter Agnes was wife of his successor, the Rev. Dr. Henry Duncan. The Rev. John Craig's wife was Barbara, daughter of the Rev. Alex. Orr of Hoddam.' (Letter to the writer of this book from Mr. Henry Duncan, grandson of Agnes Craig or Duncan.)

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'This Whistle's your challenge, to Scotland get o'er,
And drink them to Hell, Sir! or ne'er see me more!'

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur'd, what champions fell :
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle their requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Scaur,¹
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea ;
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain'd ;
Which now in his house has for ages remain'd ;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw :
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law ;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins ;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil ;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

'By the gods of the ancients!' Glenriddel replies,
'Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o'er.'

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe, or his friend ;
Said : 'Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field,'
And, knee-deep in claret, he'd die ere he'd yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care ;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame
Than the sense, wit, and taste of a sweet lovely dame.

A Bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day ;

¹The Cairn and the Scaur are affluents of the Nith.

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A Bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And ev'ry new cork is a new spring of joy ;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay Pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er :
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,¹
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles a-piece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestor did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare ungodly would wage :
A high Ruling Elder to wallow in wine !
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end ;
But who can with Fate and quart bumpers contend !
Though Fate said, a hero should perish in light ;
So uprose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

Next uprose our Bard, like a prophet in drink :—
' Craigdarroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink !
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime !

' Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce :
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay ;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day !'

A VISION.

(During his residence in Dumfries, Burns often walked to Lincluden Abbey, situated at the junction of the Cluden with the Nith. The 'roofless tower' of 'A Vision' was part of the ruins of the Abbey.)

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,

¹ company.

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Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care :

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky,
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase distant roaring swells and fa's.

The cauld blae North was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din ;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like Fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin' look had daunted me ;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain
The sacred posy—'Libertie !'

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumb'ring Dead to hear ;
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear !

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME.

(This poem, in an earlier version, was severely criticised by Burns's Edinburgh friend, Dr. Gregory, who recommended him to study and imitate the smooth lyrics of Mrs. John Hunter! The 'ruffian' so vigorously cursed by the poet, was a young farmer named Thomson.)

Inhuman man ! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye ;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart !

Go live, poor wand'rer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains !
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

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Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith¹ I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

DOES HAUGHTY GAUL INVASION THREAT?

Tune—'Push about the Jorum.'

Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, Sir!
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir!
The Nith shall run to Corsincon,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!

O let us not, like snarling tykes,
In wrangling be divided,
Till, slap! come in an unco loun,
And wi' a rung decide it!
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang ourselves united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!

The kettle o' the Kirk and State,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But Deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca' a nail in't!
Our father's blude the kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it;

¹'Winding Nith'—The epithets applied to the Nith in Burns's verse are commonplace, and one of them, 'winding,' is employed in no fewer than four different poems. Nowhere does he give a picture of the Nith equal to that of the less beautiful Ayr presented in 'Thou ling'ring star':

'Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wildwoods, thickening green.'

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By Heav'ns! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!

The wretch that would a tyrant own,
And the wretch, his true-born brother,
Who would set the Mob aboon the Throne,
May they be damn'd together!
Who will not sing 'God save the King,'
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing 'God save the King,'
We'll ne'er forget the People!

LAST MAY A BRAW WOER.

Last May a braw woer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men—
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me, believe me—
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me!

He spak o' the darts o' my bonie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was diein.
I said he might die when he liket for Jean:
The Lord forgi'e me for liein, for liein—
The Lord forgi'e me for liein!

A weel-stocket mailen, himsel' for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers—
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? In a fortnight or less
(The de'il tak' his taste to gae near her!)
He up the Gate-Slack¹ to my black cousin, Bess!
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her—
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the niest week, as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock,²

¹“Gate-Slack,” the word you object to in my last ballad, is positively the name of a particular place, a kind of passage up among the Lowther hills' (Burns to George Thomson, August 1795).

²Dalgarnock—'Alongside the church of Dalgarnock in ancient times a small village had sprung up, where the fair was held, and its ruins

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An' wha but my fine fickle lover was there !
 I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock—
 I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
 Lest neebours might say I was saucy :
 My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
 And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie—
 And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet :
 Gin she had recover'd her hearin' ?
 And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't feet ?
 But, heavens ! how he fell a-swearin', a-swearin'—
 But, heavens ! how he fell a-swearin'.

He beggèd, for gudesake, I wad be his wife,
 Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow ;
 So e'en to preserve the pair body in life,
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow—
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow !

O WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

(Written in honour of Jessy Lewars, Dumfries, who helped Mrs. Burns to nurse the dying poet.)

O wert thou in the cauld blast
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
 My plaidie to the angry airt,
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee :
 Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
 Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
 Thy bield should be my bosom,
 To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
 Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
 The desert were a Paradise,
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there :
 Or were I Monarch o' the globe,
 Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
 The brightest jewel in my Crown
 Wad be my Queen, wad be my Queen.

were still to be found towards the end of last (18th) century.'
 (Ramage's *Drumlanrig and the Douglasses*, Dumfries, 1876, p. 221.)

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Maria Riddell (Mrs. Walter Riddell), one of the ornaments of Dumfries society in Burns's day, and the cleverest woman in the circle of his acquaintance, was a versifier so accomplished that he could honestly praise her work. 'The Lady, too,' he wrote, 'is a Votary of the Muses; and as I think myself somewhat of a judge in my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the Lady-Poetesses of the day.'¹

Mrs. Riddell was the daughter of William Woodley, Governor of St. Kitts and the Leeward Islands. Married to Walter Riddell in 1790, she came, a year later, to Goldielea, an old mansion in the neighbourhood of Dumfries which, during her husband's brief ownership, was called Woodley Park as a compliment to her. She liked Dumfries, and would not have disputed the Rev. Dr. Burnside's assertion that it could boast of 'people as genteel and fashionable as are to be seen in any provincial town whatever.'²

When Mrs. Riddell first met Burns, she was engaged in the preparation of her *Voyages to the Madeira and Leeward Caribbee Islands* (1792). Obtaining from him an introduction to William Smellie, she submitted her MS. to that able but eccentric typographer and naturalist, who rendered assistance in connection with some papers on natural history that formed a feature of the work. Maria Riddell's next publication was an article on Burns, printed in the *Dumfries Weekly Journal* shortly after his death. A few days before the appearance of the sketch, she had paid a yet finer tribute to his memory by going at night to St. Michael's Churchyard and planting his grave with laurels. In 1802 she published *The Metrical Miscellany*, a collection which includes sixteen of her own lyrics, and a song by Mrs. M'Lehose, Burns's Clarinda.

¹ Letter to William Smellie, 22nd January, 1792.

² Burnside MS. (in possession of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Antiquarian Society), p. 72.

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In 1807 the poetess, who had been left a widow several years before, married a Welsh landed proprietor named Philipps Lloyd Fletcher; and on 15th December, 1808, she died. A daughter by whom she was survived married Captain Charles Montague Walker, R.E., and had eight children. Sir Guy Douglas Arthur Fleetwood Wilson of the War Office is a grandson of Captain and Mrs. Walker, and consequently a great-grandson of the lady who is the subject of these lines :

‘ Maria, all my thought and dream,
Inspires my vocal shell :
The more I praise my lovely theme,
The more the truth I tell.’¹

The best known of Mrs. Riddell’s poetical productions is a song in the vernacular, written in response to Burns’s ‘Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?’ :

‘ Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay, my Willie—yet believe me ;
’Tweel, thou know’st na every pang
Wad wring my bosom should’st thou leave me,’ etc.

The following lines addressed to a friend ‘who had recommended the precepts of the Stoic School to the Author’s Adoption,’ are pleasing :

‘ Hence with the Stoic lore ! whose frigid art
Would chill the gen’rous feelings of the soul,
Forbid kind Sympathy’s responsive smart,
Or check the tear of rapture ere it roll.
Still with its joys and woes, a changeful train !
Fair Sensibility be ever mine,
Th’ alternate throb of pleasure or of pain,
And all that love and friendship can combine.’²

Writing to Mrs. Dunlop in 1789, Burns referred to ‘an epistle, part poetic and part prosaic,’ which he

¹For additional information regarding the descendants of Mrs. Riddell, see a valuable article on ‘The Riddells of Glenriddell’ in the *Dumfries Standard* of 10th April, 1897.

²*The Metrical Miscellany*, p. 45.

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had received from Janet Little, a Dumfriesshire rhymer, who afterwards visited Ellisland to obtain an interview with the poet, but failed, as he was suffering at the time from the effects of an accident. Janet was born at Nether Bogside, a small farm near Ecclefechan, in 1759. She began life as a domestic servant, and was employed in that capacity first in Annandale and afterwards in Glasgow.

When Burns wrote the few words that immortalised Miss Little, she was in charge of the dairy at Loudoun Castle, where Mrs. Henrie, the daughter of Mrs. Dunlop, resided. When the bloom of youth was past, the 'Scotch Milk-maid,' as the poetess called herself, married an elderly working-man named John Richmond, and in March 1813 she died, aged 54, and was buried in Loudoun Kirkyard.¹

Her effusions were gathered together in 1792, and published at Ayr in a volume entitled *The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid*. It is clear from the book that Janet had no inconsiderable acquaintance with English poetry of the conventional eighteenth-century type. Her rustic lovers are usually called Damon and Phillis—not Jock and Jenny, and their talk is of the Cyprian Queen and of Phœbus gilding the eastern sky. At times, however, the 'Milk-maid' condescends to be simple, natural, and *Scotch*, and then she is generally interesting.

Here is a delightful picture from her 'Hallowe'en,' a 'work' suggested by one of Burns's finest poems :

'The cushion game, perform'd at last,
Was most of all admired :

¹In a useful 'Burns Obituary,' published in the *Burns Chronicle*, No. V., the date of Janet's death is erroneously stated as 1818. That she died on 5th March, 1813, is proved by the inscription on her tombstone, for a copy of which the writer is indebted to Mr. A. B. Todd, Editor of *The Cumnock Express*:—'In Memory of John Richmond who died August 10th 1819 aged 78 years, and Janet Little his Spouse who died March 5th 1813 aged 54 years.'

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From Janet's bed a bolster came,
Nor lad nor lass was missing;
But ilka ane wha caught the same
Was pleased wi' rowth o' kissing,
Fu' sweet that night!'¹

Miss Jenny Graham, another Annandale poetess mentioned by Burns, wrote a humorous song entitled 'The Wayward Wife,' which had some popularity in her own day. Born in 1724, she was the eldest daughter of William Graham of Shaw, in Hutton Parish, a relative of Dr. Blacklock's wife.² Miss Graham appears to have resided in Dumfries at one time, but her later years were mostly spent in Edinburgh, where she died in 1805. Burns considered her song 'beautiful,'³ and Allan Cunningham gave it a place in his *Songs of Scotland*.

WAYWARD WIFE.

(From Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, Edit. 1776, vol. ii. pp. 120-1.)

Alas! my son, you little know
The sorrows that from wedlock flow:
Farewell to every day of ease,
When you've gotten a wife to please:
Sae bide you yet, and bide you yet,
Ye little ken what's to betide you yet,
The half of that will gane you yet,
If a wayward wife obtain you yet.
The black cow on your foot ne'er trod,⁴
Which gars you sing along the road,
Sae bide you yet, &c.

¹ *Poetical Works of Janet Little* (1792), p. 170.

² Letter to the writer from the late Rev. William Bennet, Moffat, who was related to the Grahams.

³ Notes to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*.

⁴ In the "Orlando Furioso" of Sir John Harrington we meet with the proverbial line,

"The black ox has not trod on their toe";

and in the north of England it still continues to be applied in the manner of the song' (Allan Cunningham).

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Sometimes the rock, sometimes the reel,
Or some piece of the spinning-wheel,
She will drive at ye wi' good will,
And then she'll send you to the de'il.

Sae bide you yet, &c.

When I, like you, was young and free,
I valu'd not the proudest she;
Like you I vainly boasted then,
That men alone were born to reign;

But bide you yet, &c.

Great Hercules, and Samson too,
Were stronger men than I or you;
Yet they were baffled by their dears,
And felt the distaff and the sheers;

Sae bide you yet, &c.

Stout gates of brass, and well-built walls,
Are proof 'gainst swords and cannon-balls,
But nought is found by sea or land,
That can a wayward wife withstand.

Sae bide you yet, &c.

Among the contemporaries of Burns was John Mayne, author of 'The Siller Gun,' who, though born two months later than the Ayrshire poet, won earlier recognition as a writer of Scottish verse. He was a native of Dumfries, and was carefully educated at the Grammar School of that town under Dr. Chapman, the eminent schoolmaster eulogised in these lines :

'Chapman, wi' fond parental care,
Has lair combin'd
With a' the gems and jewels rare
That deck the mind!'¹

On leaving school, Mayne entered the printing office of Robert Jackson,² who afterwards started the *Dumfries Weekly Journal*, the first newspaper published in the

¹ 'The Siller Gun,' edit. 1836, Canto iii. Stanza 26. Chapman died in Edinburgh in 1806, aged 82.

² For many years Provost of the Burgh.

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town. Having on the King's birthday, 1777, witnessed a great shooting match for a tube of silver about ten inches long, said to have been presented to the Incorporated Trades of Dumfries by James VI., he produced a dozen stanzas on the interesting old ceremony, and these stanzas, the original of his 'Siller Gun,' were printed on a quarto page almost immediately after the competition for the coveted token.

Early in life the poet removed with his parents to Glasgow, where for five years he wrought as a printer.¹ While resident in the city of 'clean-keepit streets,' as he describes Glasgow, he published in book form an enlarged 'Siller Gun,' together with a poem, entitled 'Hallow E'en,' which had appeared in Ruddiman's *The Edinburgh Weekly Magazine* in November 1780. It has been conjectured that Burns drew the hint of his 'Hallowe'en' from Mayne's poem on the same subject. Burns was indebted for more than the hint of his 'Logan Water' to a song of the same name by Mayne, written in Glasgow about 1781 :

By Logan's streams that rin sae deep,
Fu' aft, wi' glee, I've herded sheep—
Herded sheep, or gathered slaes,
Wi' my dear lad, on Logan Braes.
But, waes my heart! thae days are gane,
And, fu' of grief, I herd my lane;
While my dear lad maun face his faes
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes!

Nae mair, at Logan Kirk, will he,
Atween the preachings, meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or, when it's mirk,
Convey me hame frae Logan Kirk.
I weel may sing—thae days are gane!
Frae kirk and fair I come alane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes!

¹ He could not have been in the employment of the printers of the 'Immaculate Horace,' as most of his biographers assert. Both Robert

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In 1787 Mayne settled in London, and at the beginning of the following year he joined with Burns's correspondent, Peter Stuart, in founding *The Star and Evening Advertiser*. Stuart soon left him, and brought out a *Star* of his own—the print in which Dundas's execrable lines on the Duchess of Gordon were first attributed to Burns. Knowing that his fame would rest on 'The Siller Gun,' Mayne continued to expand and improve that poem up to the year of his death, which witnessed the publication of a London edition. The list of subscribers for the work in its final shape includes such names as Thomas Campbell, Allan Cunningham, J. G. Lockhart, and W. Mackworth Praed. Mayne died on the 14th March, 1836, respected to the last by all who knew him. His friend Allan Cunningham expressed an opinion shared by many when he said, 'a better or warmer-hearted man than John Mayne never existed.'

'The Siller Gun' is a poem in the manner of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' which indeed furnished the motto on its title page :

'Was ne'er in Scotland heard or seen
Sic dancing and deray,
Nowther at Falkland on the Green,
Nor Peebles at the Play.'

Sir Walter Scott declared that the work 'surpassed the best efforts of Fergusson, and came near to those of Burns.'¹ This praise is exaggerated, for though 'The Siller Gun' has movement and colour, and possesses value as a record of old burghal manners, it is by no means a triumph of poetical expression. Even the warmest admirer of John Mayne must wish that Burns had dealt with a subject which, in the hands of a master, would have been invested with undying interest.

and Andrew Foulis were dead before Mayne left Dumfries. But he may have worked under an engagement with a son of Robert Foulis who was a printer in Glasgow.

¹ Note to the fifth canto of the 'Lady of the Lake.'

BURNS AND OTHER POETS

As a suitable introduction to an extract from the first canto of Mayne's popular poem, a few sentences about the curious relic of wapinschawing which survived in Dumfries, may be quoted from the Rev. Dr. Burnside's MS. 'History of the Town and Parish of Dumfries,' a work written in 1791 :

'The Gun is a small silver tube, like the Barrel of a pistol, which King James VI., in one of his journeys to England, is said to have given to the Trades of Dumfries with his Royal licence, or injunction, to shoot for it once a year, with a view, as is alledged, of rendering them expert in the use of Arms. Till lately, every Deacon Convenor was allowed, if he pleased, to call out the Trades for this purpose, once, during his administration, which lasts generally two years. As it was found however to be attended with a certain Expence, a regulation has been made amongst the trades themselves that it shall not take place but once in five years.¹ When called out, the whole Freemen of the Burgh must appear at the place appointed by the Convenor for shooting at a Mark. The person who is most successful returns to town with the Silver Gun tied with ribbons to his hat, and he is supposed to be Master of it till the next similar occasion. If any individual refuse to appear he is subjected to a fine of £3 6s. 8d. and prevented from voting in any of the trades affairs till the fine be paid. On the same day the journeymen and apprentices shoot for some small premium, and as they also join in it, it makes the procession very numerous.'²

FROM 'THE SILLER GUN.'

(Edition 1836, pp. 6-18.)

The lift was clear, the morn serene,
The sun just glinting ower the scene,

¹ Before the publication of the first English edition of Mayne's poem (1808), the festival had become an 'ance-in-seven-years' jubilee.'

² Burnside MS. p. 15.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

When James M'Noe began again
To beat to arms,
Rousing the heart o' man and wean
Wi' War's alarms!

Frae far and near, the country lads
(Their joes ahint them on their yads,
Flock'd in to see the show in squads;
And, what was dafter,
Their pawky mithers and their dads
Cam trotting after!

And mony a beau and belle were there,
Doited wi' dozing on a chair;
For, lest they'd, sleeping, spoil their hair,
Or miss the sight,
The gowks, like bairns before a fair,
Sat up a' night!

Wi' hats as black as ony raven,
Fresh as the rose, their beards new shaven,
And a' their Sunday's cleeding having
Sae trim and gay,
Forth cam our Trades, some orra saving
To wair that day.

Fair fa' ilk canny, caidgy carl,
Weel may he bruik his new apparel!
And never dree the bitter snarl
O' scowling wife!
But, blest in pantry, barn, and barrel,
Be blithe through life!

Hegh, sirs! what crowds cam into town,
To see them must'ring up and down!
Lasses and lads, sun-burnt and brown—
Women and weans,
Gentle and semple, mingling, crown
The gladsome scenes!

At first, forenent ilk deacon's hallan,
His ain brigade was made to fall in;
And, while the muster-roll was calling,
And joy bells jowing,
Het-pints, weel spic'd, to keep the saul in,
Around were flowing!

BURNS AND OTHER POETS

Broil'd kipper, cheese and bread, and ham,
Laid the foundation for a dram
O' whisky, gin frae Rotterdam,
Or cherry-brandy ;
Whilk after, a' was fish that cam
To Jock or Sandy :

O ! weel ken they wha loo their chappin,
Drink maks the auldest swack and strappin' ;
Gars Care forget the ills that happen—
The blate look spruce—
And ev'n the thowless cock their tappin,¹
And craw fu' croose !

The muster ower, the diff'rent bands
File aff, in parties, to the Sands ;
Where, 'mid loud laughs and clapping hands,
Gley'd Geordy Smith
Reviews them, and their line expands
Alang the Nith !

But ne'er, for uniform or air,
Was sic a group review'd elsewhere !
The short, the tall ; fat fowk, and spare ;
Syde coats, and docket ;
Wigs, queues, and clubs, and curly hair ;
Round hats, and cockit !

As to their guns—thae fell engines,
Borrow'd or begg'd, were of a' kinds,
For bloody war, or bad designs,
Or shooting cushies—
Lang fowling-pieces, carabines,
And blunder-busses !

Maist feck, though oil'd to mak them glimmer,
Hadna been shot for mony a Simmer ;
And Fame, the story-telling kimmer,
Jocosely hints
That some o' them had bits o' timmer
Instead o' flints !

Some guns, she threeps, within her ken,
Were spik'd, to let nae priming ben ;

¹ crest.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

And, as in twenty there were ten
Worm-eaten stocks,
Sae, here and there a rozit-end
Held on their locks!

And then, to show what diff'rence stands
Atween the leaders and their bands,
Swords that, unsheath'd since Prestonpans,
Neglected lay,
Were furbish'd up, to grace the hands
O' Chiefs, this day!

'Ohon!' says George, and gae a grane,
'The age o' chivalry is gane!
Syne, having ower and ower again
The hale survey'd,
Their route, and a' things else, made plain,
He snuff'd, and said:

'Now, Gentlemen! now mind the motion,
And dinna, this time, mak a botion:
Shouter your arms!—O! ha'd them tosh on,
And not athraw!
Wheel wi' your left hands to the ocean,
And march awa!'

Wi' that, the dinlin drums rebound,
Fifes, clarionets, and hautboys sound!
Through crowds on crowds, collected round,
The Corporations
Trudge aff, while Echo's self is drown'd
In acclamations!

Their steps to martial airs agreeing,
And a' the Seven Trades' colours fleeing,
Bent for the Craigs, O! weel worth seeing!
They hied awa;
Their bauld Convener proud o' being
The Chief ower a'!

Attended by his body-guard,
He stepp'd in gracefu'ness unpair'd!
Straught as the poplar on the swaird,
And strong as Samson,
Nae e'e cou'd look without regard
On Robin Tamson!

BURNS AND OTHER POETS

His Craft, the Hammermen, fu' braw,
Led the procession, twa and twa :
The leddies wav'd their napkins a'
 And boys huzza'd,
As onward to the Waponshaw
 They stately strade !

Close to the Hammermen, behold,
The Squaremen¹ come like chiefs of old !
The Weavers, syne, their flags unfold ;
 And, after them,
The Tailors walk, erect and bold,
 Intent on fame !

The Sutors, o' King Crispin vain,
March next in turn to the campaign ;
And, while the crowd applauds again,
 See, too, the Tanners,
Extending far the glitt'ring train
 O' guns and banners !

The Fleshers, on this joyous day,
Bring up the rearward in array :
Enarm'd, they mak a grand display—
 A' jolly chieils,
Able, in ony desp'rate fray,
 To fecht like deils !

The journeymen were a' sae gaucy,
Th' apprentices sae kir² and saucy,
That, as they gaed along the causey,
 Ahint them a',
Th' applauding heart o' mony a lassie
 Was stown awa !

Very different from the respectable John Mayne was the mendicant bard, Stewart Lewis, author of a version of the popular song 'O'er the Moor amang the Heather,' and a ballad on 'Fair Helen of Kirkconnel.' The son of an innkeeper and farmer, Lewis was born at Ecclefechan, probably in 1756. While he was a mere child, his father died bankrupt, leaving a wife and several children in an almost destitute condition. Owing to his

¹ Carpenters.

² consequential.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

mother's poverty, the boy's school days were shortened ; but he remained under the rod of the parish schoolmaster, old William Irving, the writer of *Lag's Elegy*, long enough to gain a little stock of Latin quotations equal to that which Arthur Donnithorne considered sufficient for ordinary purposes. At the age of 13, Stewart left Ecclefechan, and went to Manchester to assist a brother who was in business in that city. A few years later, along with a partner, he established himself as a clothier at Chester, but fortune did not favour him, and after an absence from Scotland of ten years, he returned to his native village and commenced business as a tailor. While at Ecclefechan he married a girl to whom he was devotedly attached, and wrote 'Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lee,' a ballad which was long popular in Lower Annandale.¹

Under the pressure of poverty, Lewis in 1793 exchanged his goose for a sword, and enlisted as a private sentinel in the Hopetoun Fencibles. In 1797 he published at Aberdeen a collection of lyrics on the themes usually selected by Scottish minstrels of the humbler order :

'Friendship, love, and sovereign whisky.'²

When the Fencibles were disbanded, he became a pedlar, but soon lost his whole store, being robbed while in a state of intoxication. After trying various kinds of uncongenial work, he finally settled in the character of a wandering poet, selling his odes and songs, and begging food and shelter as he moved along. Finding himself at Kirkcaldy one summer's day in 1818, he visited Carlyle, then engaged in 'schoolmastering,' and being old and poor, received both sympathy and substantial help.³ A victim to intemperance, he died in a lodging-house at Ruthwell on 22nd September, 1818.

¹ The ninth and last edition was published at Annan in 1866.

² 'Let Misers bow at Mammon's Shrine' in *A Collection of Songs*, by Stewart Lewis, Aberdeen, 1797, p. 19.

³ See Carlyle's account of the visit in *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. i. pp. 166-7.

BURNS AND OTHER POETS

Dr. Robert Chambers, who had some acquaintance with Stewart Lewis, thus describes the strange being : ' His person was slender, his face interesting, and bearing peculiar marks of genius and intelligence ; his forehead was high, his hair gray and thin, and he had a countenance wrinkled with care and squalid with poverty.'¹

In conversation, Lewis affected singularity, and always displayed that fervour which he thought should characterise the utterances of a true poet. He was an affectionate husband ; and his extravagances never robbed him of the love and respect of his amiable partner, whose death in the spring of 1817 drove him to the verge of distraction.

Lewis's 'Ae morn of May' is really good, though disfigured by a reference to 'Scotia's Isle' ; and as a version of 'O'er the Moor amang the Heather' which may have been written before the popular 'Comin' through the craigs o' Kyle,' it should be familiar to all readers of Scottish poetry. In a note to the lyric in the second edition of his *Collection* (1802),² Lewis, in no ambiguous terms, claims for his set priority of date :

'This Song, which is pretty well known in several parts of Scotland, has been honoured with the names of different authors. I, however, do declare that it was written by me, about fourteen years ago. A circumstance well known in the shire of Dumfries.' The common version first appeared in *The Scots Musical Museum*, and was received by the editor of that work from Burns, who, in the annotated copy of the book presented to Glenriddell, attributes it to Jean Glover, a girl of notoriously bad character, and explains that he 'took the song down from her singing as she was strolling through the country with a slight-of-hand blackguard.' It is hardly likely that a woman of the character described would be able to write so pure and pretty a lyric ; and, apart from the assertion of Burns,

¹ *The Kaleidoscope*.

² *A Collection of Poems and Songs*, Glasgow, 1802, p. 97.

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who may have been misinformed, there is no evidence that Jean Glover ever penned a line of poetry. It will be observed that in his note the distinguished poet does not say *when* or *where* he heard 'Comin' through the craigs o' Kyle' sung by Jean. If he took down the song before 1788, it must be an older version of 'O'er the Moor amang the Heather' than 'Ae morn of May,' notwithstanding Stewart Lewis's declaration; but if it was during his residence in Dumfriesshire that the illustrious collector secured 'Comin' through the craigs,' probably the Annandale set was written before the common one.

O'ER THE MOOR AMANG THE HEATHER.

(From *A Collection of Poems and Songs by Stewart Lewis*,
Glasgow, 1802, pp. 97-9.)

Ae morn of May, when fields were gay,
Serene and charming was the weather,
I chanc'd to roam some miles frae home,
Far o'er yon moor, amang the heather.

CHORUS.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
How healthsome 'tis to range the moors,
And brush the dew from vernal heather!

I walk'd along, and humm'd a song,
My heart was light as ony feather,
And soon did pass a lovely lass,
Was wading barefoot thro' the heather.

CHORUS.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
The bonniest lass that e'er I saw,
I met ae morn amang the heather.

Her eyes divine, mair bright did shine,
Than the most clear unclouded æther;

BURNS AND OTHER POETS

A fairer form did ne'er adorn
A brighter scene than blooming heather.

CHORUS.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
There's ne'er a lass in Scotia's isle
Can vie with her amang the heather.

I said, 'Dear maid, be not afraid,
Pray, sit ye down, let's talk together,
For, O! my fair, I vow and swear,
You've stole my heart amang the heather.'

CHORUS.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
Ye swains, beware of yonder moor,
You'll lose your hearts amang the heather.

She answer'd me, right modestly,
'I go, kind Sir, to seek my father,
Whose fleecy charge, he tends at large,
On yon green hills, beyond the heather.'

CHORUS.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
Were I a king, thou shouldst be mine,
Dear blooming maid amang the heather.

Away she flew out of my view,
Her home or name I ne'er could gather,
But aye sin' syne I sigh and pine
For that sweet lass amang the heather.

CHORUS.

O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
While vital heat glows in my heart,
I'll love the lass amang the heather.

Burns's eldest son, Robert, had a taste for poetry, and wrote several songs in the Scottish dialect. He was born at Mauchline on 3rd September, 1786, and was educated at Dumfries Grammar School, and at the Universities of

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Glasgow and Edinburgh. That the care bestowed on his education was not in vain is shown by the fact that in his later years he was able to increase his small income by giving private lessons in Latin and mathematics. In 1804 young Burns went to London, having gained a clerkship in the Stamp Office; and in 1809 he published *The Caledonian Musical Museum, or Complete Vocal Library*, a collection of Scottish lyrics by different authors. Retiring on a pension in 1833, he returned in that year to Dumfries, where he remained till his death on 14th May, 1857.

The happiest of this author's effusions is a song in praise of Miss Margaret Kay Hamilton Fullarton, Friars' Carse, afterwards the wife of Robert Ross, gardener, Blackwood House. It was copied by the present writer from the original in Mrs. Ross's album, lent to him by her daughter, Miss Mary Ross, Brydekirk, near Annan. A later version, under the title 'Pretty Meg, my Dearie,' was sent by the author in 1850 to a literary friend, who published it in *The Manchester City News*, 28th February, 1880. 'The air,' says the poet, 'is one of Neil Gow's finest compositions. He calls it "Mrs. Wemyss of Cuttlehill's Strathspey," but it is well known in Ayrshire by the rather emphatic name of "Kiss me at your leisure."¹ Mrs. Ross died at Brydekirk on 30th October, 1880, aged 70, and was buried in Annan New Churchyard.

TO MISS M. F.

As I gaed up the side o' Nith,
Ae simmer morning early,
Wi' gowden locks, on dewy leas
The broom was wavin' fairly.
Aloft, unseen, in cloudless sky,
The lark was singing clearly,
When wadin' through the broom I spied
My pretty Meg, my dearie.

¹ Note in Mrs. Ross's album.

BURNS AND OTHER POETS

Like dawning light on stormy night
To sailors wae and weary,
Sic joy to me the glint to see
O pretty Meg, my dearie!

Her lips were like a half-seen rose
When day is breaking paly,
Her ee'n beneath her bonie brow
Like rain-drops frae a lily.
Like twa young blue-bells fill'd wi' dew,
They glanc'd baith bright and clearly;
Aboon them shone, o' glossy brown,
The locks o' Meg, my dearie.
Of a' the flowers in sunny bowers
That bloom'd that morn sae cheery,
The sweetest flower that happy hour
Was pretty Meg, my dearie.¹

I took her by the sma' white hand,
My heart sprang in my bosom—
Upon her face dwelt maiden grace,
Like sunshine on a blossom.
I listen'd to the hymn o' joy
Frae ilka birdie near me—
Yon hawthorn's lintie sang o' thee,
My pretty Meg, my dearie!
Till tyrant Death shall blin' my e'e,
When life grows dim and dreary,
I'll mind the shade where lang I stray'd
Wi' pretty Meg, my dearie!

ROBERT BURNS,
July, 1836.

¹ A painting of 'Pretty Meg' in the possession of Miss Ross bears out the lyrist's description of her charms.

VII

GEORGIAN BALLADISTS

THOUGH we are indebted to Burns for the preservation of 'Gude Wallace' and 'The Blind Harper'—a version of 'The Lochmaben Harper'—he was no great admirer of the old ballads of his country. Works of mere antiquarian value were not likely to have any attraction for a great original poet intensely interested in the life of his own day; but it does seem strange that Burns did not recognise more fully the importance of Percy's epoch-making *Reliques*.¹ Certainly his own work as a poet would not have suffered if he had devoted as much attention to 'Edward, Edward' and 'Sir Patrick Spens' as to Blair's 'Grave' and the 'divine Elegies' of Shenstone.

The old lays published in various collections, though undervalued by Burns, were fully appreciated by many in the Dumfriesshire dales. That mediaevalism in thought and feeling which repelled him had irresistible attraction for some minds, and in different parts of the county little collections of ballads were formed. Burns's friend Robert Riddell, in his pleasant home on the banks of the Nith, gathered materials which were to prove highly serviceable to the editor of the *Border Minstrelsy*, while Dr. Clapperton of Lochmaben, who supplied the Laird of Friars' Carse with versions of 'Fair Helen'

¹ Burns read Percy's *Reliques* at Ellisland (see his letter to Dr. John Moore dated 28th Feb. 1791).

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and 'The Lochmaben Harper,' was also an indefatigable collector.

The revived interest in ballad literature led not merely to the recovery and preservation of old popular rhymes but also to the production of new poems similar in form. Most of these lays were avowedly mere imitations of minstrel compositions; but 'The Duke o' Milk' and 'The Bedesman on Nidsyde'—ballads which demand our attention—were unmistakably designed to impose on unsuspecting lovers of 'antient' poetry, and may therefore be described as spurious antiques.

A copy of 'The Duke o' Milk' is preserved among David Herd's MSS. in the British Museum, and another copy is to be found in the Glenriddell MS., where the title given is 'Jock of Milk and Jean of Bonshaw.' The ballad can be traced back to the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Writing not later than 1776, Herd thus refers to it: 'This long curious piece was taken down in the country from Recitation—by one William Bell from Annandale, about 1770. But several lines were defaced and illegible, being so cut and gone to pieces by long wearing in his pocket that the present arrangement is merely arbitrary and may be altered at pleasure.'¹ Scott and Sharpe were both well acquainted with 'The Duke o' Milk,' and they considered it in every way a wretched performance. A few verses will sufficiently represent a ballad which Sharpe called 'an ill executed forgery.'²

¹ *Herd's MSS.* volume ii. folio 11. In a letter to George Paton, dated 7th July, 1778, Herd describes more particularly the condition of the MS. which he obtained from Bell: 'I inclose you an old Ballad, which I got upwards of two years ago from one William Bell, who had picked it up in Annandale; it was all in detached scraps of paper, wrote down by himself at different times, as he met with those who remembered any thing of it—part of these he had lost, and some of the remainder were illegible, being chaff'd in his pocket' (*Letters from Bishop Percy, &c., to George Paton*, Edin. 1830, pp. 80-1).

² Jotting in a volume of Sharpe's MSS., lent by Mr. Macmath.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

FROM 'THE DUKE O' MILK.'

(*Herd's MSS.* vol. i. folios 122-4.)

Ere they came to the Water side
The English made a stand,
Whare Peircy and brave Jock o' Milk
Did fight it hand to hand.

Proud Peircy cry'd 'Revenge yourselves
On this young deadly fae,
For sic another warrior
Poor Scotland has nae mae.'

Brave Milk had but three hundred men,
And Peircy five times three.
Five hundred slain lay on the plain,
The rest he gar'd them flee.

He followed them out our the Mers,
And flounc'd into the flood;
He dy'd the Waters as they past
Red wi' the Reaver's Blood.

But news was brought to Scotland's King,¹
As he stood on the Hill,
That Peircy he had fac'd about,
And Jock o' Milk was kill'd.

That gallant Milk and Annan lads
Had bravely won the day;
But lifeless fell that very breath—
The English ran away.

Great David strak his royal breast,
Said, 'Fickle fate O' weir!
A Great but dear-bought Victory,
The day has cost me dear.

I'v lost an Army by this fall,
Oh! lovely, hapless youth—
What clan wi' Bonshaw's can compare
For valour and for truth!'

He cry'd, 'Advance my Body Guards,
My Grooms gar strip my steed,

¹ David II.

GEORGIAN BALLADISTS

I'll honour ay his very name
Be he alive or dead !'

He quickly hey'd him down the Hill,
I wat he did na bide
Till he came to the Scottish clans,
About the Evening tide.

Great Murray and his merry lads
Rejoic'd their king to see,
Brave Milk for faintness couldna stand
But raise up to his knee.

The King he lowly louted down,
As he lay on the Land,
And call'd him, 'Cousin Duke o' Milk,'¹
And took him by the hand.

'The Dukes are Cousins a' in France,
Their title makes it good,
But Bonshaw by the Mother's side
Is come of Bruce's blood.

Bear witness here my nobles a'
Upon the battle field,
Thou and thy Heirs are Dukes o' Milk,
I crown thee with my shield.'

'The Bedesman on Nidsyde' was published in 1790, along with a fragment entitled 'Y'e Mort o' Lauch.'² Like those remarkable poems which Chatterton pretended to have discovered in 'Canyng's Coffe,' the ballad seems to have been largely composed from glossaries of old authors; but, unlike the youthful bard of Bristol's

¹ 'Duke o' Milk.'—There were no 'Dukes' in David II.'s time; but in later days the recognised head of the Irving clans in Hoddam was known as the Duc. 'In "Acta Dominorum Concilii," 6th Nov. 1490, we have a reference to John Irvin, callit the Duc' (George Irving's *The Irvings of Hoddam*, Annan, 1902, p. 3). A farm near the mouth of the Milk was called 'Duke of Hoddam' before 1600, for it is in Blaeu's Map of Annandale—drawn by Timothy Pont between 1590 and 1600, though not engraved until 60 years later.

² London, printed for S. Hooper, 112 High Holborn. The first 'fytte' of the 'Bedesman' had already been printed in *The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany* for January 1788.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

productions, it was accepted as ancient by nobody. The piece is generally supposed to have been written by Glenriddell, whose friend Grose designed the frontispiece or illustration on the title-page. 'My father,' wrote Sharpe, 'always thought that Mr. Riddell was the author of the verses, but I am tempted to believe that Burns had some hand in them, particularly as Sir Walter Scott deems them much too good for the other, whose poetical compositions are execrable.'¹ Scott, in a letter to Sharpe, expresses an unfavourable opinion of Glenriddell as an author, but does not pronounce 'The Bedesman on Nidsyde' to be 'much too good' for him, or refer to any poems of which he was the acknowledged author. His words are: 'Bad as the "Bedesman" is, I think it must have been rather beyond Glenriddell, at least if I can judge from some of his prose compositions now in my hands, which are truly the most extravagant compositions that ever a poor man, abandoned by Providence to the imagination of his own heart, had the misfortune to devise.'² Sharpe's conjecture that the greatest of Riddell's contemporaries had a hand in the composition of 'The Bedesman' may be lightly dismissed. Burns had no taste for stiff archaic verse, and nothing in the ballad is suggestive of his touch. Probably the piece would have seemed to him unworthy of even that mild toleration which he extended to the feeble lyrics of Mrs. Patrick Miller.

'The Bedesman' purports to describe events connected with the Crusade in which Richard I. took part. According to the ballad, a party of Dumfriesshire gentlemen, including Sir Herbert Mundaville, Dunegal of Stranid, Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, Sir Robert Ross, and Sir Eustace de Maxwell, joined the army of the English king, and won distinction in the Holy Land. In all probability Cœur de Lion had no Dumfriesshire followers, though, as Dr. Neilson has pointed out, 'there is some faint

¹ MS. note on Sharpe's copy of the poem.

² *Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe*, vol. i. p. 146.

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traditional evidence for one representative of the Maxwell family having gone to Jerusalem as a crusader in the thirteenth century, under the banner of King Louis IX.¹ The poet's gallant knights are of different historical ages, and most of them belong to a much later period than that of 'Stalwart Richard, Ynglonde's glore.' Mundaville and Kirkpatrick figure on the Ragman Roll (1296), and it is recorded that Sir Eustace de Maxwell was present at the coronation of Edward Baliol in 1332. Sir Robert Ross held Sanquhar at the close of the thirteenth century; but his Christian name was ancestral, and the fact that a 'Robert de Ros' flourished in the time of Richard suggests that there may have been a 'Schir Rab' about the date of the third Crusade to answer the poem. Dunegal of Stranid certainly belongs to a more remote age than any of the other warriors named, being mentioned in the following description of the vast estate granted about 1124 to Robert the Bruce—the first of that name who settled in Scotland,—taken from the Charter by which the property was conveyed to Bruce: 'Estrahannent and the whole land from the march of Dunegal of Stranid even to the march of Randolph Meschinus.'

FROM 'THE BEDESMAN ON NIDSYDE.'

Fytte II.

The man O' lore, wi' winsome fasche,
Begouth his balfu' Saw,
My dairthful Syre, stark Tinwald's Thane,²
Our Genterice was nae sma.

Schir Harboard Mundaville the Bauld,
He was caw'd; for in Weir
Richt mony Minny's³ had he reiv'd,
O' Wichts⁴ thay lude fow dear:

¹ *Annals of the Solway*, p. 38.

² Mundaville. 'Dairthful' probably has the sense of 'highly prized,' or 'of price.'

³ Minnies—mothers.

⁴ Wichts—men, or sons here.

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The stalwart Richard, Ynglonde's glore,
To Haly Eard was bown,
His Brand he branglit sae brilzean,¹
He dang the dour Maheun.

The stark and hawtane Donegal,
Thane of Stra-Nid sae grene,
Had graith'd² him wi' the Haly-Corse
To fair wi' Ynglonde's Kynge.

Schir Rodger de Kilpatericke,
Child³ of Killosburnes Touris,
Had in his Basnet,⁴ heisit the corse,
Zeid frae his Ledy's Boures.

Schir Rab the Roos,⁵ of gentil laits,
Thane of hie Sanguhars Peel,⁶
On his Caprousy⁷ heis't the corse,
He stalwart was and leil.

Torthorwald's stark and douchty Wicht⁸
Zeid wi' the valziant thrang,
Mysell graith'd out in Abergown,⁹
Wend wi' the leve amang.

¹ brilzean, probably meant as a form of 'brilliant.' See fifth ensuing verse.

² graith'd—bedecked.

³ Child—Knight; 'not an unusual meaning of the word in old romances' (Halliwell).

⁴ Basnet—helmet; 'O is my basnet a widow's curch?', 'Kinmont Willie.'

⁵ Ross.

⁶ The Castle of Sanquhar is referred to apropos of the flight of Sir Robert de Ros to it in 1296: 'Sen trey a Senewar, un petit chastel qil avoit en Éscope' (*Scalacronica*, p. 122). 'Peel was an unknown term in Scotland until Edward I. introduced it, and Sanquhar Peel is probably an example of it very late in origin' (*Annals of the Solway*, p. 38).

⁷ Caprousy, 'A short cloak furnished with a hood' (Jamieson). The word occurs in Ramsay's 'Evergreen.' Evidently the balladist regarded the caprousy as a surcoat, on which the knight had his cross set up, fixed, or sewn.

⁸ The earliest lairds of Torthorwald were Carlyles.

⁹ Abergown, habergeon—a shirt of mail.

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In twa score Carvels¹ frae Cockpool,²
Wee brilzean Lundin raucht,
A myghtye meany, and valziant thrang,
Wha fremit ferly's³ saucht.

From Fytte III.

A Bacheleere in Abergown,
Cam' up his men beforne,
A bettar Captayn was never sene,
A balder was never born :

In gramarye he was of lore,
Nae brande coude on hym byte,
Nae heathen hound, or termagaunt,
Coude throw his bassonett smyte ;

Schir Eustace Macuswall he's caw'd,
Inne sothe Skottlonde he bode ;
On his bred banner stode bedight
The egil and the roode.⁴

Eaglesfield Smith (1772-1838), a balladist who did not think it necessary to give his days and nights to the study of obsolete words, inherited from his father the property of Blackwoodhouse in Middlebie, and also the estate of Eyam in the Derbyshire parish memorable for its awful visitation by the plague in 1665-6. He married a Dumfriesshire lady, Judith Elizabeth, second daughter of Sir Paulus Æmilius Irving, Bart., of Robgill and Woodhouse, in Kirkpatrick-Fleming, and of Lady Elizabeth, his wife. The poet died at Lochvale, a country-house between Collin and Dumfries, and was buried in the family vault in the churchyard of Kirkpatrick-

¹ Carvel, 'The ordinary name from the 15th to the 17th C. of a somewhat small, light, and fast ship, chiefly of Spain and Portugal.'

² Situated at the mouth of the Lochar. Some of the English vessels which in 1300 came to assist in the attack on Caerlaverock were probably moored there: 'hence perhaps the name of Cokpule (Cog-pool?) not heard of till after this date' (*Annals of the Solway*, p. 61, note).

³ ferlies—marvels.

⁴ The figures of the eagle and the rood have appeared on the arms of the Maxwells for many centuries.

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Fleming. A good monument to his memory exists in the now thriving Annandale village of Eaglesfield, which he founded, and to which he gave his own name.¹

Smith published in book form *Sir John Butt*, a comedy in two acts (Edinburgh, 1798); *Legendary Tales*, a collection of original ballads (Carlisle, 1806); and *Poetical Works by Eaglesfield Smith, Esq.* (London, 1822, 2 volumes).

The most valuable of his poems is 'William and Ellen,' a ballad on the famous Kirkconnel story, first published in 1796. According to his version of the tale, Ellen's father, regardless of her affection for an amiable youth named William, tried to compel her to marry Irving, a man of savage disposition. William and Ellen eloped, but they were soon discovered by Irving, who forced his rival on board a ship intending to sell him for a slave or throw him into the sea. After suffering shipwreck, William returned to Scotland, and met his betrothed on the green margin of the Kirtle. Irving, who had planted himself among the bushes on the opposite side of the river, aimed an arrow at William's heart; and Ellen, rushing forward to protect her lover, received the fatal shaft in her own breast. Pursued by William through Britain, Lapland, and Russia, the wretched Irving was at length overtaken in Tartary and slain. The story of 'William and Ellen' is of interest to the antiquary, for its main features seem to have been reproduced from a popular version of the Kirkconnel tale different from that known to Pennant. An old ballad, of which part was still recited in Annandale in Smith's youth, represented Ellen's murderer as having been killed in Tartary, and as late as the second quarter of the nineteenth century some of the peasantry alleged that the heroine was 'slain

¹The name of Eaglesfield had come into the family through marriage with a Miss Eaglesfield, descended from the founder of Queen's College, Oxford, of whom there is an interesting account in Ingram's *Memorials of Oxford*, vol. i. For the personal and family details given on this and the preceding page the writer is indebted to Mrs. Macmorland of Blackwoodhouse, Smith's grand-daughter.

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by an arrow in place of a bullet.'¹ A second edition of 'William and Ellen' appeared in 1798, and the poem was afterwards included in *Legendary Tales* (1806).²

FROM 'WILLIAM AND ELLEN.'

(*Legendary Tales*, pp. 137-9.)

Let future ages know the place,—
There grows a lovely tree,
And spreades its arms o'er Ellen's tomb
In fair Kirconnel lee.

A slender poplar by it grows,
With tender boughs entwin'd,
The guardian elm, like William still,
Proves to his Ellen kind.

High tow'ring o'er Kirconnel's vale,
The ancient tow'r yet stands,
Rear'd in rude times of Agincourt,
And all the plain commands.

The brawling Kirtle rolls beneath
His dark and moory stream ;
The banks be-deck'd with aged oaks,
Where soaring herons scream.

Here oft the furious whirlwinds' roar
Uproots the knotted oak,
Where blasts athwart the birch trees hiss,
And lofty turrets rock.

Here Melancholy loves to stray,
'Tis here the lovers lie,
Where pilgrims come to view the grave,
And heave the mournful sigh.

Here ever shall they lie in peace,
In ages yet to come,
And wailing sorrow still shall hie
To weep o'er Ellen's tomb.

¹ Stenhouse's *Illustrations*, 1853, p. 144.

² Reprinted in 1807, under a new title, *On the Tragic Ballad with some account of Legendary Tales by Eaglesfield Smith, Esq.*

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Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe—a more celebrated Annandale man—was the third son of Burns's correspondent, Charles Sharpe of Hoddam, and the beautiful Eleanora, youngest daughter of John Renton of Lamerton. Charles Sharpe, originally Charles Kirkpatrick, was the son of William Kirkpatrick of Ailsland (brother of Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn), to whom Matthew Sharpe of Hoddam had bequeathed his estate. The ballad-writer's interest in Closeburn, the home of his famous ancestor Sir Roger Kirkpatrick who taught the Bruce to 'mak siccar,' is revealed in some lines not hitherto published :

'O Closeburn! dear I love thine antique towers,
The proud abode of many a Baron brave
And many a stately Dame—
Heroes who erst dear Caledon did save
From Southern tyrants—
Piercing the Saxon breast plates with their glaive—
Long sunk in dust—Ah! never more to rise,
Till the last trumpet calls them trembling to the skies.'¹

Sharpe was born on 15th May, 1781, at Hoddam Castle, a beautifully situated old pile of which Pennant gives a representation. With the view of taking Episcopal orders he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated as B.A. in June, 1802, and M.A. in June, 1806. Notwithstanding his success as a student, he ultimately gave up all thoughts of entering the Church, probably owing to 'a peculiar effeminacy of voice which must have been unpleasant in reading prayers.'² While at Christ Church, Sharpe composed several poems of a satirical nature, and had the honour of being enlisted by Canning in the band of Anti-Jacobin writers. A better outlet for his talent than even the famous Tory 'Literary Censor' afforded, was found in 1803, when the third volume of Scott's *Border Minstrelsy* was issued.

¹ From the original MS. lent by Mr. Macmath.

² Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*, vol. i. p. 2. Sharpe was known in Edinburgh as 'Cheepin' Chairlie' (*Book of Old Edinburgh*, 130).

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From childhood Kirkpatrick Sharpe had 'gaped' for ballads, and the appearance of a satisfactory collection of old 'Border Lays' could not but arouse his enthusiasm. After the publication of the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, he wrote to Scott, sending copies of 'The Twa Corbies' and 'The Douglas Tragedy,' in the hope that these ancient ballads might be printed in a third volume of the work. Scott gladly accepted the two poems offered, and invited further communications, informing his correspondent that 'every scrap of legendary intelligence, prosaic or poetical' would be thankfully received.¹ In addition to his versions of 'The Twa Corbies' and 'The Douglas Tragedy,' Sharpe contributed to the *Minstrelsy* two original ballads, 'The Lord Herries his Complaint'—on which Scott made some judicious alterations—and 'The Murder of Caerlaveroc.' In 1807 he published at Oxford *Metrical Legends*, a volume of ballads and other poems dedicated to his cousin, Miss Campbell of Monzie. A year later he completed a tragedy entitled 'Spanish Vengeance,' which was never publicly performed. The opening stanza of a song afterwards written for introduction into this play may be quoted.

'O to sleep
For ever in the grave,
Where no fell passions tumult keep
And torture their poor slave!
Where the pale coward's heart at ease
Lies mould'ring with the bold,
Where jealousy and anger freeze;
And love itself—and love itself is cold.'²

After the death of his father in 1813, Sharpe fixed his residence in Edinburgh. For about twenty years he lived with his mother at 93 Princes Street, adding to an already extensive collection of historical relics, annotating books

¹ Letter of 13th August, 1802—*Sharpe's Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 138.

² From Sharpe's MS., in possession of Mr. Macmath. The song was printed in *Etchings by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe* (1869).

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on subjects which had for him a special interest, and producing queer Hogarthian sketches. Among his few associates was Walter Scott, in whose opinion 'C. K. S., with his oddities, tastes, satire, and high aristocratic feelings, resembled Horace Walpole.'¹ Much though he valued the society of the great novelist, Sharpe would never visit Abbotsford, for, like the Suffolk recluse, Edward FitzGerald, he hated the excitement and exertion of travelling.

In 1823 Kirkpatrick Sharpe privately printed a collection of old ballads and lyrics under the title, *A Ballad Book*. Among the pieces which form the collection are 'Annie Laurie,' 'Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,' 'May Collin' (a variant of 'Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight'), and important versions of 'Mary Hamilton' and 'Fair Janet.' Some of the other items are as gross as the humorous chapbook tales of Dougal Graham, works which long afforded delight to Scottish farm-servants who had no taste for commentaries on the 'Song of Solomon' or lives of Cameronian worthies.

Sharpe did excellent work by making generally accessible several curious old Scottish histories. Of the prose works edited by him the most valued are Kirkton's *The Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Present Time*, 1678, in which the fanaticism characteristic of some of the Covenanters is painted by a 'true professor,' and Law's *Memorialls, or the memorable things that fell out in my time* (1638-84) *in this Island*, a chronicle of exploits by evil spirits, well nigh as fascinating as the more widely-known *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*.

Every poet, great or small, must echo the prayer of Horace :

'Nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec cithara carentem.'

Happily Kirkpatrick Sharpe was not 'tuneless in age,' though most of his later poems were left incomplete and

¹ *Journal*, vol. i. p. 3.

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consequently have not been published. 'Come tip us a glass of true blue,' a song written in the decline of life, has a few references to the eccentric author's personal tastes :

'I still make the best of my lot,
For that is the way to be easy,
Poor—silly—unlearned—and a Scot
Democritus never could teaze me.
E'en now every trifle I love,
Books, beasts, reptiles, birds—the cuckoo,
Aye—there's the best comfort, by Jove,
So tip us a glass of true blue.'¹

By the death of Sharpe, which occurred on 17th March, 1851, at 28 Drummond Place, where he had latterly been settled, Edinburgh lost one of the most picturesque figures she had known for half-a-century. Old-fashioned in everything, he retained till the close of his life the style of dress that was in vogue in the days of Pitt, and walked abroad habited in a blue surtout of great length, a voluminous neckcloth, and silk stockings and pumps. In the most readable of John Hill Burton's works there is a sketch of the old man, not excelled for graphic skill by Sharpe's own etchings : 'His face was ruddy, but not with the ruddiness of youth ; and bearing on his head a Brutus wig of the light-brown hair which had long ago legitimately shaded his brow, when he stood still—except for his linen, which was snowy white—one might suppose that he had been shot and stuffed on his return home from college, and had been sprinkled with the frowzy mouldiness which time imparts to stuffed animals and other things, in which a resemblance to the freshness of living nature is vainly attempted to be preserved.'²

A number of Sharpe's pieces were included in a large quarto entitled *Etchings by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, with Photographs from Original Drawings, Poetical and Prose*

¹ From the original MS., in Mr. Macmath's collection.

² *The Book Hunter*, p. 22.

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Fragments, and a Prefatory Memoir (Edin. 1869). Among them are 'The Wizard Peter' (originally issued separately in 1834), which won praise from Allan Cunningham, but was not unjustly condemned by Sharpe himself as 'replete with anachronisms and Scotticisms,'¹ and 'Sir Hugh,' a tale of the supernatural. The version of 'Sir Hugh' in *Etchings* was reproduced from *Metrical Legends*, but the ballad-writer left in MS. a revised and much improved version, which is now printed for the first time.

SIR HUGH.

(From Sharpe's MS. in the possession of Mr. Macmath. Referring to the printed version of this ballad, Scott in 1808 wrote: 'There is one verse, or rather the whole description of a musical ghost lady sitting among the ruins of her father's tower, that pleased me very much.')

Sir Hugh rode forth one summer eve
To smell the thorns in flower;
When lo! a dame he did perceive
Sit by a ruin'd tower.

Of beauty rare, her raven hair
Did down her pale cheek flow;
And her eye shone clear, as stars appear
That gleam o'er hills of snow.

She wore a kell² of black velvette,
And a robe of velvette green;
Her flowing veil of silver net
Might grace the Fairy Queen.

She touch'd a lute of Ivory small
And sang with witching power—
'The grass grows in my father's hall,
The thistle in my mother's bower.'

A mossy stone was all her seat,³
And downcast was her head—
Sir Hugh reined in his courser fleet,
And thus he softly said:

¹ Introduction to the ballad.

² head-dress.

³ The MS. here gives as an alternative reading: 'The ivy drooped around her seat.'

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'O Lady fair, why sit you there
Alone by the ruin'd wall?
The evening star shines bright afar,
And chill the damp dews fall.'

'O, well I love the twilight hour,
When all the world is mute ;
And echo from the lonely tower
Sings sweetest to my lute.

Alight, alight, thou gentle knight,
And let thy courser rove,
While I thine eager ears delight
With lays of melting love.'

'My sire that castle overthrew,
Destroy'd the owner's name :
His wife and daughter perish'd too,
Unpitied in the flame.

Sad spectres oft, with dismal groans,
Glide slowly o'er the green ;
And through the crevice of the stones
Pale rays of light are seen.

And still, at midnight hour, 'tis said,
Again the castle burns ;
Tho' not one ivy leaf doth fade,
When cheerful dawn returns.'

'Alight, alight, faint hearted knight
No ghost thou needst to fear—
For I can quell the fiends of hell
With carols loud and clear.'

He spurr'd his steed—she struck her lute,
And sang so loud and shrill
That Echo join'd in sweet pursuit
From ev'ry tower and hill.

The witching sounds, in evil hour,
Arrest the warrior's way—
Ah ! who can conquer music's power
When Beauty chaunts the lay ?

With luckless speed he left his steed,
And sat the Lady by ;

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The nightshade shook in the Gothic nook,
And the owl was heard to cry.

The nightshade shook in the Gothic nook
At her chords of magic power—
With fatal weight, on the hapless knight
Rush'd down the crashing tower.

But still they tell, at that lone place
The fatal form is seen—
With silver veil—and downcast face—
And robes of velvette green.

She strikes a lute of ivory small,
And sings with syren power—
'The grass grows in my father's hall,
The thistle in my mother's bower.'

Finer than 'Sir Hugh' is the *Minstrelsy* ballad 'Lord Herries his Complaint,' which relates a story connected with Repentance Tower, a square building, anciently used as a watch-house, situated on a conspicuous height near to Hoddam Castle. Over the doorway of that tower are carved the word 'Repentance' and figures popularly supposed to represent a serpent and a dove—emblems of remorse and forgiveness. According to the tradition followed by Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the tower was built by a certain Lord Herries in token of repentance for his cruelty in casting a number of English prisoners into the Solway Firth to relieve his boat during a storm. The real history of the turret, as lately unfolded, excels in tragic interest the tale rendered widely popular by Sharpe. Dr. George Neilson in his *Repentance Tower* (1895) has shown that the building was erected by John Maxwell, afterwards Lord Herries, the leader of Queen Mary's horsemen at Langside and 'one of the most singular and forceful figures of the sixteenth century.' By treacherously attacking the English, whom he had sworn to assist, Maxwell, in 1548, was the direct cause of the hanging of fourteen of his hostages at Carlisle,

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and thus he may well have been the victim of cruel remorse in later days.

THE LORD HERRIES HIS COMPLAINT.

A Fragment.

Bright shone the moon on Hoddam's wall,
Bright on Repentance Tower ;
Mirk was the Lord of Hoddam's saul,
That chief sae sad and sour.

He sat him on Repentance hicht,
And glowr'd upon the sea ;
And sair and heavily he sicht,
But nae drap eased his bree.

'The night is fair, and calm the air,
No blasts disturb the tree ;
Baith men and beast now take their rest,
And a's at peace but me.

'Can wealth and power in princely bower,
Can beauty's rolling ee,
Can friendship dear, wi' kindly tear,
Bring back my peace to me ?

'No ! lang lang maun the mourner pine,
And meikle penance dree,
Wha has a heavy heart like mine,
Ere light that heart can be.

'Under yon silver skimming waves,
That saftly rise and fa',
Lie mouldering banes in sandy graves,
They fley my peace awa'.

'To help my boat, I pierced the throat
Of him whom ane lo'ed dear ;
Nought did I spare his yellow hair,
And een sae bricht and clear.

'She sits her lane, and maketh mane,
And sings a waefu' sang,—

"Scotch reivers hae my darling ta'en ;
O Willie tarries lang !"

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- ‘ I plunged an auld man in the sea,
Whase locks were like the snaw;
His hairs sall serve for rapes to me,
In hell my saul to draw.
- ‘ Soon did thy smile, sweet baby, stint,
Torn frae the nurse’s knee,
That smile, that might hae saftened flint,
And still’d the raging sea.
- ‘ Alas! twelve precious lives were spilt,
My worthless spark to save;
Bet¹ had I fall’n, withouten guilt,
Frae cradle to the grave.
- ‘ Repentance! signal of my bale,
Built of the lasting stane,
Ye lang shall tell the bluidy tale,
When I am dead and gane.
- ‘ How Hoddam’s Lord, ye lang sall tell,
By conscience stricken sair,
In life sustain’d the pains of hell,
And perish’d in despair.’

Unlike Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Allan Cunningham—the most important Dumfriesshire ballad-writer of the Georgian period—could not boast of high lineage; but Professor Saintsbury’s statement that he was ‘born in the lowest rank’² is incorrect. John Cunningham, the poet’s father, who had been unsuccessful in farming on his own account, was overseer to the proprietor of Blackwood, in the parish of Keir. The earliest authentic record of the family to which he belonged dates from about 1740, when they tenanted the farm of Gogar Mains, near Edinburgh. Traditionally they are said to have come from Ayrshire, and to have been farmers and corn millers in that county for several generations.³

¹ Bet—better.

² *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, p. 108.

³ Article on Cunningham by his grand-nephew, the late Mr. Anthony C. M’Bryde, in *Dumfries Standard* of 5th Dec., 1894.

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Allan, the fourth son of John Cunningham and Elizabeth Harley, was born on 7th December, 1784, in a cottage at Blackwood which has long since disappeared. Having obtained the post of factor to Burns's friend Miller, John Cunningham in 1786 removed with his family to Dalswinton, in the parish of Kirkmahoe, where he remained till his death in 1800, occupying Sandbed, a farmhouse on the left bank of the Nith. Whilst tenant of Ellisland, Burns was a neighbour of Cunningham's; and on a memorable day in 1790 Allan, standing at his father's knee, heard the great poet repeat 'Tam o' Shanter,' his beautiful voice varying with the character of the tale.¹

As there was no parochial school within easy access of Sandbed, Allan Cunningham received his scanty education at a dame's school in the hamlet of Quarrelwood. At the age of eleven he was removed from the care of his teachers, and placed under the charge of a brother resident in Dalswinton village, to learn the trade of stone-mason. Soon after his apprenticeship began, Allan saw Burns 'laid out for the grave,' and followed his remains to St. Michael's Churchyard. So much did he admire poetic genius that when 'Marmion' appeared he walked from Dalswinton to Edinburgh to get a glimpse of Walter Scott. Before this journey took place he had become acquainted with the Ettrick Shepherd. Hogg, in telling how the two Cunninghams visited him when he occupied a bothy on Queensberry Hill, pictures Allan as 'a dark ungainly youth of about eighteen, with a buirdly frame for his age, and strongly marked, manly features—the very model of Burns, and exactly such a man.'²

Nothing of value was published by Cunningham before 1810, when, in Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, many of his compositions were printed as ancient. In the summer of 1809 Robert Hartley Cromek,

¹ Cunningham's essay on 'Robert Burns and Lord Byron' in the *London Magazine* of August, 1824.

² *Reminiscences of Former Days*.

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a London engraver and picture publisher, had visited Dumfriesshire with the object of gathering materials for an illustrated edition of Burns. From Mrs. Fletcher, Edinburgh—the friend of Scott and Campbell—he brought a letter of introduction to Cunningham, then a journeyman mason earning eighteen shillings a week. The youth submitted some of his lyrical productions, which were already numerous, to the judgment of Cromek, who remarked: ‘Your verses are well, very well; but no one should try to write songs after Robert Burns unless he could either write like him or some of the old minstrels.’ Nodding assent, the poet changed the subject of conversation, and talked of the fragments of ancient poetry still to be picked up among the peasantry of southern Scotland. ‘Gad, Sir!’ said Cromek, ‘if we could but make a volume. Gad, Sir! see what Percy has done, and Ritson, and Mr. Scott more recently with his *Border Minstrelsy!*’¹

Assailed by a temptation to palm off a number of his pieces as genuine relics of the past, and thus secure for them a reception not likely to be gained on their own merits, Allan promised to put down anything he knew. In a short time Cromek was in possession of many songs and ballads by Cunningham, and these compositions formed the main portion of his *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*. That volume had a favourable reception, but specialists on ballad-poetry were not mistaken as to the true character of its contents. The aged Bishop Percy pronounced the poems to be forgeries, Sir Walter Scott shook his head, and the Ettrick Shepherd declared that the book was virtually the work of his friend, Allan Cunningham, whose ‘luxuriousness of fancy’ was unequalled.

Before the publication of Cromek’s book, Cunningham had gone to London to seek his fortune as a writer. In the metropolis he obtained some employment for his

¹ Peter Cunningham’s ‘Introduction’ to *Poems and Songs by Allan Cunningham* (1847), p. xi.

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pen, but, not being too liberally remunerated for his contributions to magazines, he was soon glad to accept the situation of foreman to Chantrey the sculptor. The union thus formed between the English artist and the Scottish poet continued till Sir Francis Chantrey's death, which took place about a year earlier than that of his 'friend and assistant.'

In 1820 Cunningham transmitted to Sir Walter Scott, now a personal friend, the MS. of a long historical tragedy entitled 'Sir Marmaduke Maxwell,' requesting his opinion of the work. The drama is poor, and even Scott could say but little in its favour. Instead of committing his tragedy to the kindly flames, Allan sent it to the printers, and in March, 1822, 'Sir Marmaduke Maxwell' was published. To console the author for the inevitable failure of his book, Scott, in the introduction to *The Fortunes of Nigel*, referred in no uncomplimentary terms to the tragedy.

Cunningham's later works embrace *The Songs of Scotland, Ancient and Modern* (1825), an anthology materially lessened in value by the liberties taken with the text of the pieces given, and two volumes of original verse—*The Magic Bridle* (1829) and *The Maid of Elvar* (1833). More successful than any of these publications was his prose work entitled *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, which formed part of Murray's Family Library. The literary execution of this book was universally admired, and Southey gladdened the heart of the author by declaring that his English was better than that of any other Scots writer, 'with the exception, perhaps, of Hume.' An edition of Burns in eight volumes, with a sketch of the great lyricist's career, and a life of Sir David Wilkie, were the last and not the least important of Allan's literary labours.

In 1831 Cunningham, revisiting his native county, was entertained at a great public dinner in Dumfries. Among those who did him honour on that occasion was Thomas Carlyle, who, at the commencement of a speech in pro-

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posing the memory of Burns, said he had come down from his retreat in the Dunscore Hills to meet Allan Cunningham 'at a time when scarcely any other circumstance could have induced him to move half a mile from home.' Carlyle and his wife afterwards came in contact with Allan in London, and neither ever spoke disdainfully of the 'solid Dumfries stonemason.'

The strain of incessant toil in the studio and at the desk was too heavy for even Cunningham's strength. About 1840 his health became seriously impaired, and he 'felt what doctors close their eyes on.' The end came in October, 1842, when he was seized with paralysis, and died after a brief illness at the age of fifty-seven. Only two days before the fatal attack he had revised the last proof-sheet of his *Life of Sir David Wilkie*.

The ballads and lyrics from *The Songs of Scotland* and *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song* which are given on the following pages may be accepted as fair specimens of the more valuable work of a gifted poet who has been too often represented in anthologies by such poems as the crude 'She's gane to dwell in Heaven' and the irreverent 'Bonnie Lady Ann.'

THE BONNIE BAIRNS.

(From *Songs of Scotland*, vol. ii. pp. 70-1. Cunningham describes the verses as 'old and remarkable,' and declares that he merely 'arranged and eked them out.' But this was honest Allan's way; and though doubtless the ballad was suggested by 'The Cruel Mother,' a piece of which several versions exist, it must be considered as in reality the work of Cunningham.)

The lady she walk'd in yon wild wood,
Aneath the hollin tree;
And she was aware of two bonnie bairns
Were running at her knee.
The tane it pull'd a red, red rose,
With a hand as soft as silk;
The other, it pull'd the lily pale,
Wi' a hand mair white than milk.

'Now, why pull ye the rose, fair bairns?
And why the white lily?'

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- ‘O we sue wi’ them at the seat of grace,
For the soul of thee, ladie!’
‘O bide wi’ me, my twa bonnie bairns!
I’ll cleed ye rich and fine;
And all for the blaeberreries of the wood,
Yese hae white bread and wine.’

She heard a voice, a sweet low voice,
Say, ‘Weans, ye tarry lang’—
She stretch’d her hand to the youngest bairn:
‘Kiss me before ye gang.’
She sought to take a lily hand,
And kiss a rosie chin—
O, nought sae pure can bide the touch
Of a hand red-wet wi’ sin!

- The stars were shooting to and fro,
And wild-fire filled the air,
As that lady follow’d thae bonnie bairns
For three lang hours and mair.
‘O! where dwell ye, my ain sweet bairns?
I’m wae and weary grown!’
‘O lady, we live where woe never is,
In a land to flesh unknown.’

- There came a shape which seem’d to her
As a rainbow ’mang the rain;
And sair these sweet babes pled for her,
And they pled and pled in vain.
‘And O! and O!’ said the youngest babe,
‘My mother maun come in;’
‘And O! and O!’ said the eldest babe,
‘Wash her twa hands frae sin.’
‘And O! and O!’ said the youngest babe,
‘She nursed me on her knee;’
‘And O! and O!’ said the eldest babe,
‘She’s a mither yet to me.’
‘And O! and O!’ said the babes baith,
‘Take her where waters rin,
And white as the milk o’ her white breast
Wash her twa hands from sin.’

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THE MERMAID OF GALLOWAY.

(From *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, pp. 243-6.)

The Laird of Cowehill, an estate in Holywood parish, riding homeward 'in brydal speed' hears the song of a mermaid, and turning aside he asks a token of her love:

She tyed ae link o' her wat yellow hair,
Aboon his burning bree;
Amang his curling haffet locks
She knotted knurles three.

She weaved owre his brow the white lillie,
Wi' witch-knots mae than nine;
'Gif ye were seven times bride-groom owre,
This night ye shall be mine.'

Hour after hour the Laird's bride sits in her lonely tower,
anxiously awaiting his return:

The sun lowed ruddie 'mang the dew,
Sae thick on bank and tree;
The plow-boy whistled at his darg,
The milk-may answered hie;
But the lovelie bride o' Gallowa'
Sat wi' a wat-shod ee.

Ilk breath o' wind 'mang the forest leaves
She heard the bridegroom's tongue,
And she heard the brydal-coming lilt
In every bird which sung.

She sat high on the tap towre stane,
Nae waiting May was there;
She lowsed the gowd busk frae her breast,
The kame frae 'mang her hair;
She wiped the tear-blobs frae her ee,
An' looked lang and sair!

First sang to her the blythe wee bird,
Frae aff the hawthorn green;
'Loose out the love curls frae yere hair,
Ye plaited sae weel yestreen.'

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An' the spreckled woodlark frae 'mang the clouds
O' heaven came singing down;¹
'Tauk out the bride-knots frae yere hair
An' let thae lang locks down.'

'Come, byde wi' me, ye pair o' sweet birds,
Come down an' byde wi' me;
Ye sall peckle o' the bread an' drink o' the wine,
An' gowd yere cage sall be.'

She laid the bride-cake 'neath her head,
An' syne below her feet;
An' laid her down 'tween the lillie-white sheets,
An' soundlie did she sleep!

It was i' the mid-hour o' the night,
Her siller-bell did ring;
An' soun't as if nae earthlie hand
Had pou'd the silken string.

There was a cheek touch'd that ladye's,
Cauld as the marble stane;
An' a hand cauld as the drifting snaw
Was laid on her breast-bane.

'O cauld is thy hand, my dear Willie,
O cauld, cauld is thy cheek;
An' wring thae locks o' yellow hair,
Frae which the cauld draps dreep.'

'O seek anither bridegroom, Marie,
On thae bosom-faulds to sleep;
My bride is the yellow water lillie,
Its leaves my brydal sheet!'

¹'The woodlark of our local poets is almost certain to have been the tree-pipit (*anthus arboreus*) in every case.' (Letter from Mr. Hugh S. Gladstone of Capenoch, who has in the press a book on *The Birds of Dumfriesshire*.)

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ROB ROOL AND RATTLIN' WILLIE.

(From Cunningham's *The Songs of Scotland*, vol. ii. pp. 336-7. Rattling Willie killed a brother minstrel, Robin of Rule Water, in a quarrel about the merits of their fiddling, and was hanged for the crime. Scott has a reference to his fate in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel':

'Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragged my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?')

Our Willie's away to Jeddart,
To dance on the rood-day,
A sharp sword by his side,
A fiddle to cheer the way.
The joyous tharms o' his fiddle
Rob Rule had handled rude,
And Willie left New-Mill banks
Red-wat wi' Robin's blude.

Our Willie's away to Jeddart,—
May ne'er the saints forebode
That ever sae merry a fellow
Should gang sae black a road!
For Stobbs and young Falnash
They followed him up and down,—
In the links of Ousenam Water
They found him sleeping soun'.

Now may the name of Elliot
Be cursed frae firth to firth!—
He has fettered the gude right hand
That keepit the land in mirth;
That keepit the land in mirth,
And charm'd maids' hearts frae dool;
And sair will they want him, Willie,
When birks are bare at Yule.

The lasses of Ousenam Water
Are rugging and riving their hair,
And a' for the sake of Willie,—
They'll hear his sangs nae mair.
Nae mair to his merry fiddle
Dance Teviot's maidens free:
My curses on their cunning,
Wha gaured sweet Willie dee!

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THE YOUNG MAXWELL.

(From Cromeek's *Remains*, pp. 185-6. Cunningham published a later version of this Jacobite ballad, but it is inferior to the original.)

'Whare gang ye, thou silly auld carle?
And what do you carry there?'
'I'm gaun to the hillside, thou sodger gentleman,
To shift my sheep their lair.'

Ae stride or twa took the silly auld carle,
An' a gude lang stride took he:
'I trow thou be a feck auld carle,
Will ye shaw the way to me?'

And he has gane wi' the silly auld carle,
Adown by the green-wood side;
'Light down, and gang, thou sodger gentleman,
For here ye canna ride.'

He drew the reins o' his bonnie gray steed,
An' lightly down he sprang:
Of the comeliest scarlet was his weir coat,
Whare the gowden tassels hang.

He has thrown aff his plaid, the silly auld carle,
An' his bonnet frae 'boon his bree;
An' wha was it but the young Maxwell!
An' his gude brown sword drew he!

'Thou killed my father, thou vile South'ron!
An' ye killed my breth'ren three!
Whilk brake the heart o' my ae sister,
I lov'd as the light o' my ee!

'Draw out yere sword, thou vile South'ron!
Red wat wi' blude o' my kin!
That sword it crapped the bonniest flower
E'er lifted its head to the sun!

'There's ae sad stroke for my dear auld father!
There's twa for my brethren three!
An' there's ane to thy heart, for my ae sister,
Wham I lov'd as the light o' my ee!'

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THE SUN'S BRIGHT IN FRANCE.

(Another Jacobite lay from Cromek's *Remains*, p. 178.)

The sun rises bright in France,
And fair sets he;
But he has tint the blythe blink he had
In my ain countrie.

It's nae my ain ruin
That weets ay my ee,
But the dear Marie I left a'hin,
Wi' sweet bairnies three.

Fu' bonnilie lowed my ain hearth,
An' smiled my ain Marie;
O, I've left a' my heart behind,
In my ain countrie.

O, I am leal to high heaven,
An' it'll be leal to me,
An' there I'll meet ye a' soon,
Frae my ain countrie!

FRAGMENT.

(From Cromek's *Remains*, p. 41.)

Gane were but the winter-cauld,
And gane were but the snaw,
I could sleep in the wild woods,
Whare primroses blaw.

Cauld's the snaw at my head,
And cauld at my feet,
And the finger o' death's at my een,
Closing them to sleep.

Let nane tell my father,
Or my mither sae dear,
I'll meet them baith in heaven,
At the spring o' the year.

A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA.

(From Cunningham's *The Songs of Scotland*, vol. iv. pp. 208-9.)

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast

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And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind!
I heard a fair one cry;
But give to me the swelling breeze,
And white waves heaving high;
The white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornéd moon,
And lightning in yon cloud;
And hark the music, mariners!
The wind is piping loud;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashes free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

Not unworthy of a place in the same chapter with Allan Cunningham's 'Mermaid of Galloway' is 'Young Bridekirk,' a ballad by a Gretna farmer named Ballantyne Fergusson, who died on 19th February, 1869, aged 71, leaving a great number of MS. poems and prose tales, which are now scattered and probably hopelessly lost. The ballad was never printed by the author himself, but in 1885 his son, the late Mr. John Fergusson, Douglas Farm, Gretna, communicated the piece to the editor of *The Annandale Observer*, by whom it was published.

YOUNG BRIDEKIRK.

An Old Border Ballad.

(From *The Annandale Observer*, 22nd May, 1885. A few verses are here omitted.)

'Oh, mither, the dule-knot's on my breast,
The dank dew's in my hair;

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And I canna rest, for the vrack's¹ in the west,
And my heart is wondrous sair.

'My young babe's in my arms,' she says,
'That was nouriced in shame and sin;
And he aye sleeps best when the grey cheughs² rest,
And the norland tide rows in.'

'What wicht has dune thee wrang, Marion,
When thou walked forth alane?
That I may wish on him grit harm,
Come tell to me his name;

'For I'll brew a blast o' win' and rain
In lands ayont the sea
Will trail the rose-knots on his shoon,
And his mither shall bairnless be.'

'Now haud your tongue, O mither,' she says,
'And let faul freits alane;
That day young Bridekirk streaks in corp
My heart shall brast in twain.

'Let wind and storm come as they may,
Droun vengeance in the sea;
I wadna see young Bridekirk scath'd
For a' he's dune to me.

'For is na he a hunter braw
When he rides o'er the brae,
Wi' the lads o' Hoddam at his back
A' clad in the Herries' gray?

'An' wha like him can belt a steed
To chase the hart and hind
When knightly trackers far and free
Their Border bugles wind?'

But the mither cried, 'The bitter shame
He's brought to mine and me,

¹ 'Vrack is an old word applied to that peculiar sound made by the sea at night. It is often heard in the Solway.' (Fergusson.)

² 'The "grey cheugh" is probably the grey, or hooded crow (*corvus cornix*); a not infrequent visitor in autumn and winter to the shores of the Solway.' (Letter from Mr. Hugh S. Gladstone of Capenoch.)

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I'll ne'er forget while the red sun sets,
And there's power in glamoury !'

And some were huntin' in the wood,
Some drinkin' in the ha',
But Bridekirk wad the water ride
In spite o' his kinsmen a'.

Though o'er the trees the wild win' raise,
And lightning winged the rain
Till Annan's flood ran whirling rude,
And brast out o'er the plain.

His guid black steed strack on a stane,
The water swiel'd him roun',
When man and horse sank in the faem,
For a wierd hand drew them down.

And mony a Herries sought his lord,
Frae Spedlings to the sea,
But the rain aye slocken'd the dim mort-light,
And the win' blew wondrous hie.

Next morn, when daylight dill'd the storm,
The news ran far and wide
That a knight lay drooned at Turnmuir Ford,
Wi' his black steed by his side.

They hae row'd him in a grass green shroud,
Laid him on a bier o' birk,
And the sax best men of the Herries' bluid
Him bore to Sanct Bride's kirk.

And when they'd pass'd the kirkyard yett,
They haltit at the quier ;
But the grey priest shook his head and said,
' He may not enter here.

' For he has lived a lozel's¹ life,
And died unshriv'd from sin,
And till haly kirk be paid the mass fee
To Heaven he'll ne'er won in.'

¹Lozel is a wild, extravagant fellow. The word occurs in *Piers the Plowman*.

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Then answered wroth his brother Hugh,
‘I’ll pay nae mass, propine,
For our father’s braid lands he has wastit and spent,
And the ae half by right was mine.’

And syne outspak his lady, bedeen,
‘I’ll ne’er pay the saining fee,
For he lo’ed ower weel yon randy quean
To leave ocht but the scorn for me.

‘And when he sat at the Thrave, o’ ken,
Wi’ Drumlanrick, at the wine,
And the healths gaed roun’ ’mang the Bishop’s men,
Her name took the gree o’ mine.’

In can’ the skipper’s dochter
Wi’ her wee babe in her airm,
Says, ‘Kiss thy dead faither, my bonnie bairn,
He will do thee nae hairm.

‘O! sain him, Sir Priest, wi’ mass, book, and bell,
Burn candles in the quier,
And these hands shall work till the Pape be paid,
Though it were thrice seven year.’

‘Thy work, silly maid,’ the proud priest said,
‘Will not turn Saint Peter’s key;
Mass fees must be told in the good red gold
Ere his saul be sained by me.’

She turned away from that priest in grey
To the hope that rests on Heav’n,
And her look was like the look o’ ane
Whase heart in twain is riv’n.

She’s sat her down by the dead man’s side,
O! but her heart was sair!
For mair she thought o’ the love that was past
Than the dule she was doom’d to bear.

In an earlier chapter of this book reference has been made to ‘Young Edward,’ a ballad which enshrines a legend of Morton Castle. William Bennet (originally Bennoch), author of the piece, was born on 29th September, 1802, at Moniaive. In 1822 he published at Dumfries *The Sabbath, and other Poems*, but he is remem-

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bered in his native county chiefly as the editor of *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine* (1825-6), in which 'The Brownie of Blednoch,' by William Nicholson, first appeared. Succeeding Sheridan Knowles, in 1826, as editor of the *Glasgow Free Press*, a Whig newspaper, Bennet afterwards conducted *The Glasgow Constitutional*, a Tory journal. Whilst resident in Glasgow he issued a second 'monthly'—*Bennet's Glasgow Magazine* (1832-3)—and published two collections of his pieces, *Traits of Scottish Life*, London, 3 vols. (1830), and *Songs of Solitude*, Glasgow (1831). Among the literary men of the West of Scotland whose friendship he enjoyed was Motherwell, who spent the last evening of his life as his guest.

Bennet, after leaving Glasgow, resided successively in Ireland, in London—where he published a poem, *The Chief of Glen Orchay*, 1840—in Galloway, and for a long period at Burntisland. On his retirement from public life he devoted himself mainly to a translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek, of which he gave to the world only a few specimens in *Truth Unlocked, by a Pioneer Witness*, Edinburgh, 1875. He lived latterly in Edinburgh, and died there on 3rd June, 1882.

A good idea of the spirit and style of the long ballad in which Bennet worked up the valuable traditional material relating to Morton Castle, which had come into his hand, may be obtained from the verses here reproduced:

YOUNG EDWARD.

(From *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*, volume ii. pp. 404-5. The ballad was reprinted in *Traits of Scottish Life*, volume ii.)

In consequence of the calumnious charges of Lady Morton, her lord's vassal Edward is condemned to be starved to death in the dungeon of Morton Castle. Notwithstanding the orders of the Earl he is supplied with food; and at length Lady Morton, whose conscience has been awakened, sends a page to his betrothed, Agnes, to inform her that he still lives.

Few were the hours till Agnes stood
Before Earl Morton's face,

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And for her Edward, bathed in tears,
Implored his future grace.

But when he heard that Edward lived,
Whom dead he long had deemed,
A sudden cloud o'ercast his brow,
His eyes like lightning gleamed.

The maiden's arms apart he tore,
As round his knees she clung,
And from the hall with rapid strides
Himself in fury flung.

'Ho, Walter!—Gilmour!—wretches, ho!'
The vassals trembling came,—
'How dared you, slaves! the wretch to shield,
I doomed to death and shame?

'Thee, Gilmour, on yon oak tree hung,
The hawks of heaven shall tear;
And thou, vile craven!—Walter, list!
I pardon thee—draw near!

'Go, bring in haste the two wild colts
That graze on Knockingshaw,
For Edward, ere yon sun hath set,
With them to death I'll draw.'

Fleet as an arrow Walter sped,
To wipe the offence he'd given;
And quickly came the two wild colts,
Before him deftly driven.

Soon were they caught, and both their heads
Together loosely bound,
And soon was Edward brought, and stretched
Behind them on the ground.

As there all spent and calm he lay,
With sudden light struck blind,
The cords that firmly bound his feet
Were round each colt entwined.

And on each hind-foot of the pair
Was fixed a spur of steel,
That Edward, as along they flew,
Their furious kicks might feel.

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Now all was done!—with caps uptossed,
And many a loud halloo,
The fiery colts at large were set,
And off like lightning flew.

O, dreadful, dreadful was the sight,
As o'er the stony lea,
Their victim on and on they dragged
As far as eye could see!

His spouting gore, at every bound,
To crimson dyed the green;
While back, like evening streamers thrown,
His yellow locks were seen.

Away, away the rapid pair
Still flew on wings of fear,
Along the wild and rugged path
That led to Durrisddeer.

Beneath where now the church is seen,
Among the hills so high,
A shepherd strayed his flocks beside,
And marked them drawing nigh.

He ran—they passed him like the wind,
While words, to him unknown,
From tortured Edward, living still,
Were backward faintly thrown.

But scarcely had he turned to gaze,
When, with a sudden bound,
The horses wheeled, and Edward's head
Lay rolling on the ground!

Yet still the lifeless, mangled trunk
They dragg'd, all bathed in blood,
Until at last by Carron's stream,
O'ercome with toil they stood.

There Edward's corse the shepherd took,
And in a humble grave,
Where lay the gashed and gory head,
To both a burial gave.

And soon was faithful Agnes laid
Her Edward's dust beside;

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For she, when first his fate was known,
Sunk at the tale and died!

The spot where still they calmly sleep,
A stone yet points to view;
And many a youth comes there to bless
Their names, in love so true.

And many a pilgrim there relates,
And shakes his locks of gray,
The weighty doom that from that hour
On Lady Morton lay:

How, haunted still by fearful thoughts,
Distraction seized her mind,
Till chained at last in Edward's cell,
She there her life resigned!

VIII

VARIOUS GEORGIAN VERSIFIERS

Good examples of the numerous miscellaneous poems written in Dumfriesshire soon after the publication of Cromek's *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song* will be found in *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, an anthology edited by the Rev. William Dunbar of Applegarth, and printed at Dumfries, in 1815, by 'C. Munro & Co. for Preacher and Dunbar.'

In addition to more than a hundred pieces by the Dumfriesshire Pindars and Ovids of the time, the volume contains Blacklock's 'The Graham,'¹ and two of Burns's compositions,—'Once fondly loved, and still remembered dear,' which had been printed by Currie in 1800, and 'Ye maggots! feed on Willie's brains,' an 'epitaph' published for the first time. It does not seem to be generally known that 'Ye maggots' was printed as early as 1815. Henley supposes that the lines originally appeared in Richards & Company's *The Works of Robert Burns* (1821), and indeed, they are introduced in that edition of the poet as 'Now first published from a manuscript in the handwriting of the Author.'² The account of the origin of 'Ye maggots' given in the *Minstrel* is amusing, in view of the fact that 'Willie' survived the writer of the epitaph :

¹ Perhaps supplied by the Rev. Henry Duncan, Ruthwell, who was a grand-nephew of Blacklock, and had access to a copy of the poem in MS.

² Vol. ii. p. 154.

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‘Burns, paying a visit to the “narrow house” of Mr. William Nicol of the High School, Edinburgh, and hanging, in reverential awe, over the ashes of his dearly remembered friend, spoke the following lines, which are truly characteristic of our Scottish melodist :

“Ye maggots! feed on Willie’s brains,
For few sic feasts you’ve gotten ;
You’ve got a prize o’ Willie’s heart,
For fient ae bit o’t ’s rotten.”¹

‘Once fondly loved and still remembered dear’ and ‘Ye maggots! feed on Willie’s brains’ are not the only compositions in *The Nithsdale Minstrel* attributed to the leading Scottish poet. There is a long piece entitled ‘Original Verses by Burns’; but the most innocent of readers will pronounce it a forgery before he reaches the end of the opening stanza :

‘Whoe’er thou art, these lines now reading,
Think not, though from the world receding,
I joy my lonely days to lead in
This desert drear,
That with remorse a conscience bleeding
Hath led me here.’

The book did not escape severe criticism. Allan Cunningham’s brother, Thomas Mounsey Cunningham, had contributed to *The Forest Minstrel* of his friend James Hogg ‘The Hills o’ Gallowa’, an excellent song, of which two stanzas may be quoted :

‘Amang the birks sae blythe an’ gay,
I met my Peggy hameward gaun ;
The linties chauntit on the spray,
The lammies loupit on the lawn ;
On ilka howm the swaird was mawn,
The braes wi’ gowans buskit braw,
An’ Gloamin’s plaid o’ gray was thrawn
Out owre the hills o’ Gallowa’.

¹ Page 184.

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Wi' music wild the woodlands rang,
An' fragrance wing'd along the lea,
As down we sat the flowers amang,
Upon the banks o' stately Dee;
My Peggy's arms encircled me,
An' saftly slade the hours awa',
Till e'ening coost a glimmerin' e'e
Upon the hills o' Gallowa'.

The song was appropriated for *The Nithsdale Minstrel*; and T. M. Cunningham, resenting the liberty which had been taken by the Dumfries collectors, subjected their book to a merciless 'Poetical Examination' in the columns of *The Scots Magazine*, the editor of which 'could not refuse a place to an old and valued correspondent.' The 'Poetical Examination' opens thus:

'Whereas a strangely patch'd poetic *bale*
Of odes, and rhymes, and rants, from Niddesdale,
Was brought before the *Nine*, on strong suspicion
Of being fetch'd from obsolete edition
Of bards deceas'd, or strolling minstrel's wallet,
And sent to mart as bran-new song and ballad,
Tho' well 'tis known, transgressors of this sort
Are outlaws deemed by ancient *rule of court*.

No thievish *daw*, the Sacred Sisterhood
Have sworn and said, will ever be allow'd
In classic chimney-nook to hatch and breed,
Nor on the fields of Fame to scrape and feed.'¹

Preacher and Dunbar, the publishers of *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, 'fast pinioned down,' are brought before the Nine, charged with serious offences. Cowley, Prior, and other poets accuse the prisoners of having stolen their productions and published them as the works of Nithsdale bards, while Burns declares that he has been more deeply injured, lines which he did not write having been attributed to him! The Nine look grave, and the prisoners are remanded.

William Dunbar, the editor of *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, was a brother of one of the publishers. Born at Dumfries

¹ *The Scots Magazine* of Jan. 1816.

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in 1780, he became minister of the parish of Applegarth in 1807. He devoted much time to the study of bees, and in 1840 published in Edinburgh *The Natural History of Bees*. Dr. Dunbar—for the degree of D.D. had been conferred on him by the University of St. Andrews—died at Applegarth in 1861. The *Minstrel* contains a song of his, entitled ‘The Maid of Islay’ :

‘Rising o’er the heaving billow,
Evening gilds the ocean’s swell,
While with thee, on grassy pillow,
Solitude! I love to dwell.
Lonely to the sea breeze blowing,
Oft I chaunt my love-lorn strain,
To the streamlet sweetly flowing,
Murmur oft a lover’s pain.’

.

More than a fourth of the pieces included in the collection are by William Joseph Walter, who was tutor at Terregles during the three years ending in 1815. Walter, in fact, was the ablest of the writers whom Dunbar gathered around him; and probably if he had taken the trouble to revise his poems with minute care, some of them would have afterwards figured in more important anthologies than *The Nithsdale Minstrel*. It may be inferred from a line or two in his ‘Verses on visiting the Grave of Burns, in January, 1814,’ that he had been resident in Sussex :

‘From Arun’s banks—a stream in song unblest—
A southern stream,—behold a stranger come
To view the spot where thy cold relics rest,
And pay his humble tribute at thy tomb.’¹

¹ *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, p. 62. The reference to the Arun as being ‘in song unblest’ is not happy, for Collins had written thus :

‘But wherefore need I wander wide
To old Ilissus’ distant side,
Deserted stream and mute?
Wild Arun, too, has heard thy strains,
And Echo, ’midst my native plains,
Been soothed by Pity’s lute.’

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For some years previous to 1839, when he emigrated to America, Walter was a professor in St. Edmund's College, Ware. He ultimately settled in Philadelphia, where, at his death, on 9th October, 1846, he was secretary to the British Consul.

Walter's publications embrace an edition of Southwell's prose works (London, 1828); *Sir Thomas More: his Life and Times* (Philadelphia, 1839); and *Mary Queen of Scots: a Journal of her Twenty Years' Captivity, Trial, and Execution* (Philadelphia, 1840, 2 vols.). Apparently he issued no separate collection of original poems.

His best-known poetical piece bears the title, 'Verses on an Evening View of the Ruins of Lincluden Abbey.' Soon after its appearance in Dunbar's volume that lyric made the round of several newspapers as 'an unpublished composition of the poet Burns.' But in Nithsdale Walter was not forgotten, and in *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine* for August, 1826, William Bennet vindicated the claim of the Terregles tutor to the poem.

VERSES ON AN EVENING VIEW OF THE RUINS OF LINCLUDEN.

(From *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, pp. 28-31.)

Ye holy walls, that still sublime
Resist the crumbling touch of Time;
How strongly still your view displays
The piety of ancient days!
As through your ruins, hoar and gray—
Ruins yet beauteous in decay,—
The silvery moon-beams trembling play;
The forms of ages long gone by
Crowd thick on Fancy's wondering eye,
And wake the soul to musings high.

E'en now, as lost in thought profound,
I view the solemn scene around,
And pensive gaze with wistful eyes—
The past returns, the present flies.
Again the dome, in pristine pride,
Lifts high its roof and arches wide,

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That, knit with curious tracery,
Each Gothic ornament display.
The high-arched windows, painted fair,
Show many a saint and martyr there.
As on their slender forms I gaze,
Methinks they brighten to a blaze !
With noiseless step, and taper bright,
What are yon forms that meet my sight ?
Slowly they move, while every eye
Is heavenward raised in ecstasy.
'Tis the soft, spotless, vestal train,
That seek in prayer the midnight fane.
And hark !—what more than mortal sound
Of music breathes the pile around ?—
'Tis the soft-chaunted choral song,
Whose tones the echoing aisles prolong ;
Till thence returned, they softly stray
O'er Clouden's wave with fond delay ;
Now on the rising gale swell high,
And now in fainting murmurs die.
The boatmen on Nith's gentle stream,
That glistens in the pale moon-beam,
Suspend their dashing oars, to hear
The holy anthem loud and clear ;
Each worldly thought a while forbear,
And mutter forth a half-heard prayer.

But, as I gaze, the vision fails,
Like frost-work touched by southern gales ;
The altar sinks—the tapers fade,
And all the splendid scene's decayed !
In window fair, the painted pane
No longer glows with holy stain,
But, through the broken space, the gale
Breathes chilly from the misty vale.

The bird of eve flits sullen by,
Her home, these aisles and arches high ;
The choral hymn, that erst so clear,
Broke softly sweet on Fancy's ear,
Is drowned amidst her mournful scream,
That breaks the magic of my dream ;
Roused by the sound—I start, and see
The ruined, sad reality !

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Next to Walter, the largest contributor to *The Nithsdale Minstrel* was the Rev. John Wightman, who, as the minister and friend of young Allan Cunningham, is likely to be long remembered. Born in the parish of Kirkgunzeon on 12th August, 1762, he received his University training in Edinburgh, and became minister of Kirkmahoe in 1797. Soon after his ordination he was presented by a lady with a handsome pulpit gown, of which he was extremely proud. The parishioners, however, strongly objected to the use of the robe, on the ground that it was inconsistent with puritanical plainness; and headed by the precentor, whose conscience would not allow him to 'assist a minister dressed in a black gown,' many left the church as a protest against the innovation. The old custom of bowing after the benediction to the principal heritor in church found a zealous upholder in Wightman. One Sunday, however, when about to perform the usual act of courtesy to Patrick Miller, who was his chief heritor, he discovered that the Dalswinton pew contained only Miss Miller, the laird's daughter, and some other ladies, and was so overcome with bashfulness that he omitted the customary salaam. A few days later, chancing to meet Miss Miller, a noted beauty, Wightman was rallied by her, in the presence of her friends, on his neglect of duty. 'I beg your pardon,' he said, 'but angel-worship is not allowed in the Church of Scotland.'¹

In 1806 Allan Cunningham, then a journeyman-mason, aged 22, wrote asking his minister's advice as to the choice of books; and Wightman, in reply, named several solid works and warned him of the 'danger of loving poetry too much.' When, a quarter of a century later, Cunningham was entertained at a public dinner in Dumfries, Wightman was present, and he recited an ode to his friend, which began thus :

'He's welcome back to Scotia's pale—
He's welcome to his native vale.'

¹ David Hogg's *Life and Times of the Rev. John Wightman, D.D.* (London and Dumfries, 1873), p. 172.

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In his seventy-fifth year, Wightman, who had published *Practical Lectures on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* (1834), received from Glasgow University the degree of D.D. He died on 14th July, 1847, and was buried in a retired nook of Kirkmahoe Churchyard.

Dr. Wightman's contributions to *The Nithsdale Minstrel* consist mainly of odes on 'The Death of Pitt,' 'The Russian Campaign of 1812,' and other unpromising subjects. Perhaps the most tolerable of all his productions is a little piece on 'The Death of Lord Nelson':

'As pensive she sat on her sea-beaten shore,
Britannia exclaimed, "My brave Nelson's no more"—
Who now shall be guardian of Freedom's domain,
Since Nile's laurelled hero in combat is slain?
Old Ocean I heard, thus in thunder reply—
While flashed the red lightning all over the sky—
"Our Nelson is fallen, but immortal's his name,
And heroes unborn shall yet rival his fame—
The bold sons of Freedom will guard her green isle,
They'll conquer or die, like the hero of Nile."¹

Some years after these lines were written, the author, being in Edinburgh, was taken by a friend to Nelson's Monument on the Calton Hill, and shown a copy of the poem framed and hung in a prominent place. 'You have immortalised me!' exclaimed Wightman. 'Yes, as far as rosewood and glass will do it,' was the rather cruel reply.

William Scott Irving, the most interesting of the other contributors to *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, was acquainted with Sir Walter Scott, in whose opinion he 'came the nearest to being a poet of any man who ever missed.'² He was descended from Dominie Irving, author of 'Lag's Elegy,' and was himself an Annandale schoolmaster at the outset of his career. Beginning at an early age to 'string rhymes together,' he ventured to address poems to the Misses Sharpe of Hoddam, as their brother, Kirkpatrick

¹ *The Nithsdale Minstrel*, pp. 268-9.

² *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, by R. P. Gillies (London, 1851), vol. iii. p. 56.

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Sharpe, did not fail to recall after the dominie's decease.¹ His efforts not being appreciated in his own district, Irving went to Edinburgh, where he shut himself up in a garret and covered reams of paper with poems which showed in every line the influence of Scott, Byron, or Campbell. Scott's friend, R. P. Gillies, tried to get him regular employment as a teacher of arithmetic and geometry; but the schoolmaster's mania for verse-making rendered him incapable of devoting adequate attention to the instruction of the young men who were sent to him as pupils. Sinking into deep poverty, he at last became a mendicant, shunned by all except Sir Walter and one or two other literary men who had never learned that maxim of worldly prudence which counsels the dropping of troublesome acquaintances. Even in his degradation, Irving had visions of the poet's laurel, and 'if on any day he found some one ready to do him the "God-like favour" (his own phrase) of administering a pound note, he would instantly set himself at his desk again, and work night and day for the next week.'² Ultimately abandoning hope of winning the fame for which he thirsted, Irving in the summer of 1818 cut his throat, and though the wound inflicted was not very deep, yet, like Mercutio's 'scratch,' it 'served.' In wise and tender words his countryman, Thomas Carlyle, then a schoolmaster at Kirkcaldy, conveyed the news of the Annandale teacher's melancholy death to a friend in Galloway: 'Perhaps you are acquainted with the tragic end of poor William Irving, whom you once knew. Though auguring little good of him, I never feared that he would do that deed which renders his name a thing which sober people may not mention. But now that it has happened, suicide seems a not unsuitable conclusion to his frantic and miserable way of life. I bewail his mournful destiny. Had the talents which he certainly did possess been cultivated with judgment, and directed by principle of any kind, he

¹ Sharpe's MSS., in possession of Mr. Macmath.

² *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, vol. iii. pp. 55-6.

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might have been a credit to his country.'¹ Preacher and Dunbar's volume contains three of Irving's poorest lyrics — 'The Negro's Dream,' 'The Auld Harper,' and 'The Sailor Boy.' His chief bid for fame was made in 1814, when he published 'Fair Helen,' a poem of 274 pages, dedicated not to Sir John Heron Maxwell, as Gillies states, but to the Marchioness of Queensberry. At the close of the work there is a pathetic reference to the author's misfortunes :

'My hours of bliss on earth have been,
Like days of grace, how far between ;
Yet still those hours, foredoomed to joy,
Were often mingled with alloy :
And seldom did my musings flow,
Save to the melody of woe.'

The passage of 'Fair Helen' which seems most worthy of notice relates to 'Old Red-Cap, or Bloody Bell,' a spectre believed to haunt the ruined tower of Blackethouse, on the banks of the Kirtle. 'Red-Cap' is referred to by Burns's biographer, Dr. Currie, a native of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, who says that in his youth the tower was 'the residence of a bogle or brownie.'² In the good old days the bogle must have been very active, for W. S. Irving declares that 'the legends and anecdotes of Bloody Bell would fill a large quarto volume.'

THE SPECTRE OF BLACKETHOUSE.

(From 'Fair Helen,' pp. 103-4.)

Of Blackett's towers strange tales are told,
The legendary lore of old,—
That dread belief, whose mystic spell
Could people Gothic vault or cell
With being of terrific form,
And superstition bound the charm.
'Tis said, that here, at the night's high noon,
When broad and red the eastern moon

¹ *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. i. p. 168.

² MS. account of Dr. Currie's youth, quoted in his *Memoir*, vol. i. p. 6.

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Beams through the chinks of its vast saloon,
A ghastly phantom takes its stand
On the wall that frowns o'er wear and strand,
A bloody dagger in its hand,
And ever and aye on the hollow gale
Is heard its honoric and wail
Dying along the distant vale.
The nighted peasant starts aghast
To hear its shriekings on the blast ;
Turns him to brave the wintery wind,
Nor dares he lingering look behind,
But hurries across the moaning flood,
And deems its waters swollen with blood—
Such are the tales at Lyke-wake drear,
When the unholy hour of night draws near,
When the ban-dog howls, and the lights burn blue,
And the phantom fleets before the view ;
When 'Red-cap' wakes his eldritch cry,
And the winds of the wold come moaning by.

Two years after the publication of *The Nithsdale Minstrel* Dumfries became the home of John M'Diarmid, a versatile author who, as editor of *The Dumfries and Galloway Courier*, did much to stimulate the popular interest in local verse. Born in 1790 in Glasgow, where his father, the Rev. Hugh M'Diarmid, was minister of a Gaelic chapel of ease, he began life as clerk in an Edinburgh counting-house. His career as a Dumfries journalist extended from January, 1817, to November, 1852, when it was terminated by his death. Under M'Diarmid's management the *Courier*, which had hitherto occupied an independent position in politics, became a powerful organ of the Liberal party. But the paper was no mere political print: it contained articles on every conceivable topic. That it was sufficiently lively may be gathered from the following lines which appeared in *Punch* on 19th June, 1852:

ODE TO OUR MARVELLOUS CONTEMPORARY.

Thou art the print for me,
Dumfries Courier ;

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Such wondrous things in thee
 Ever appear :
 Toads pent in solid trees,
 Enormous gooseberries,
 All sorts of prodigies,
 Right through the year.
 Tales of sagacious dogs,
Dumfries Courier ;
 And showers of fish and frogs,
 Most strange to hear :
 Twins like the Siamese,
 And winter swarms of bees,
 Wise pigs and learned fleas,
 Six legged deer.
 Mock suns and double moons,
Dumfries Courier ;
 Odd apes and strange baboons,
 Ghost stories queer :
 Dreams that have come to pass,
 Brobdignag sparrow-grass,
 Huge ox, amazing ass,
Dumfries Courier.

Though M'Diarmid's duties in the newspaper office absorbed most of his time, he yet found leisure to edit *The Scrap Book* (1821),¹ and to write *Sketches from Nature* (1830), *A Guide to Moffat, by a Visitor* (1833), and lives of Cowper, Goldsmith, and William Nicholson the Galloway poet, for editions of works by these authors. As a specimen of the unambitious verse which he occasionally contributed to the *Courier*, a few lines from a lyric entitled 'Nithside' may be quoted :

'When the lark is in the air, the leaf upon the tree,
 The butterfly disporting beside the hummel bee ;
 The scented hedges white, the fragrant meadows pied,
 How sweet it is to wander by bonnie Nithside !

When the blackbird piping loud the mavis strives to drown,
 And schoolboys seeking nests find each nursling fledged or flown,
 To hop 'mong plots and borders, array'd in all their pride,
 How sweet at dewy morn to roam by bonnie Nithside !'

¹ Not 1820 as generally stated.

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Robert Carruthers, editor of *The Inverness Courier*—a Dumfries man who owed much to John M'Diarmid—was the author of some lyrics and humorous poetical sketches, all written in youth, and printed only in magazines and newspapers. He was born on 5th November, 1799, and was early apprenticed to a Dumfries bookbinder named John Sinclair. His apprenticeship over, Carruthers removed to Huntingdon, where he remained for several years. His first book, a history of Huntingdon, appeared in 1824, and next year he contributed several poems to *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*. On the recommendation of John M'Diarmid, whose friendship he had gained in boyhood, Carruthers was in 1828 appointed editor of *The Inverness Courier*. In the columns of that journal he brought out Hugh Miller, as no reader of *My Schools and Schoolmasters* is likely to forget. Most of the original matter in *Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature* (1843-4) came from his pen, and he prepared for the *National Illustrated Library* valuable editions of Boswell's *Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides*, and *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*. In 1871 Carruthers received the degree of LL.D. from Edinburgh University, and on 26th May, 1878, he died at Inverness. One of his sons married the youngest daughter of William Laidlaw, author of 'Lucy's Flittin'.

The best of Dr. Carruthers's poems is 'Blithe Raise the Sun owr Niddisdale,'—a lyric that might have been penned by Allan Cunningham. It was published in *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine* in December, 1825.

BLITHE RAISE THE SUN OWR NIDDISDALE.

Ane Auncient Scotis Ballad.

(From *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*, vol. i. p. 535.)

Blithe raise the sun owr Niddisdale,
Bricht ran the waters cleir,
Whan I pairted wi' Jean on the May mornin'
I left auld Scotland deere.

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The merle frae the greene saugh tree
Sang hie to his bryde-mate true ;
The laverock sprang up to the glorious lift,
An' his wings were wat wi' the dew.

In quiet lang straits the holie licht lay
On the swaird by bedesmen trod ;
An' the lowne wind that crap ower the grass an' the flowers
Was filled wi' the breath o' God.

Shine on, shine on, thou bonnie blythe sun !
Alike to thee the day
That waukens me glad, or fin's me sad—
An outcast on life's way.

But be my thochts where thou dost dwell,
And be my deeds aye cleir,
An' God will be wi' me on muir an' on fell
Through the changes o' the yeere.

In 1822 a young printer in the *Courier* office, named William Millar, published a volume entitled *The Fairy Minstrel, and Other Poems*, dedicating it to his employer, John M'Diarmid. The book sold well, and the poet, in the *Courier*, thanked the inhabitants of Dumfries who had 'so promptly and liberally patronised his first attempt at authorship.' Soon after the publication of the *Minstrel* Millar went to Edinburgh, where he was employed as a compositor by Oliver & Boyd, and where he died at an early age.

'The Fairy Minstrel' is very poor, but 'The Infant's Dream,' one of the short pieces by which it is followed, has an intensity which lifts it above the level of the common-place. After Millar's death the 'Dream' became popular both in this country and America ; and about the middle of last century it was considered highly suitable for the study of pious and imaginative children.

THE INFANT'S DREAM.

Oh ! cradle me on thy knee, Mamma,
And sing me the holy strain
That soothed me last, as you fondly press'd
My glowing cheek to your soft white breast,

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For I saw a scene when I slumber'd last,
That I fain would see again, Mamma,
That I fain would see again.

And smile as you then did smile, Mamma,
And weep as you then did weep ;
Then fix on me thy glistening eye,
And gaze, and gaze till the tear be dry ;
Then rock me gently, and sing and sigh,
Till you lull me fast asleep, Mamma,
Till you lull me fast asleep.

For I dream'd a heavenly dream, Mamma,
While slumbering on thy knee ;
And I lived in a land where forms divine
In kingdoms of glory eternally shine,
And the world I would give, if the world were mine,
Again that land to see, Mamma,
Again that land to see.

I fancied we roam'd in a wood, Mamma,
And we rested us under a bough,
When near us a butterfly flaunted in pride,
And I chased it away through the forest wide,
But the night came on—I had lost my guide,
And I knew not what to do, Mamma,
And I knew not what to do !

My heart grew sick with fear, Mamma,
And loudly I wept for thee ;
But a white-robed maiden appear'd in the air,
And she flung back the curls of her golden hair,
As she kiss'd me softly ere I was aware,
Saying, 'Come, pretty babe, with me !' Mamma,
Saying, 'Come, pretty babe, with me !'

My tears and fears she quell'd, Mamma,
And she led me far away :—
We entered the door of a dark, dark tomb,
We passed through a long, long vault of gloom ;
Then open'd our eyes in a land of bloom,
And a sky of endless day, Mamma,
And a sky of endless day !

And heavenly forms were there, Mamma,
And lovely cherubs bright ;

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They smiled when they saw me, but I was amazed,
And wondering, around me I gazed and gazed,
While songs were heard, and sunny robes blazed
All glorious in the land of light, Mamma,
All glorious in the land of light!

But soon came a shining throng, Mamma,
Of white wing'd babes to me;
Their eyes look'd love, and their sweet lips smiled,
For they marvell'd to meet with an earth-born child,
And they gloried that I from the earth was exiled,
Saying, 'Here ever blest shalt thou be, pretty babe,
Oh! here ever blest shalt thou be!'

Now sing—for I fain would sleep, Mamma,
And dream as I dream'd before;
For sound was my slumber, and sweet was my rest,
While my spirit in the kingdom of life was a guest,
And the heart that has throbb'd in the climes of the blest
Can love this world no more, Mamma,
Can love this world no more.

James Hyslop, author of 'The Cameronian Dream'—another Georgian poet who died young—was born on 23rd July, 1798, at Damhead, on the farm of Kirkland, in Kirkconnel Parish.¹ Of humble parentage, he had no initial advantages, and the boy could but gather an education of a sort 'in the dead o' the year,' when there was little opportunity of labour on the moorland farms of Upper Nithsdale. His residence in the district where Cameron fought and fell began in 1812, when he became a shepherd at Nether Wellwood, in the parish of Muirkirk. In 1816 he returned to Nithsdale, and entered the service of John Laidlaw, Corsebank, near Sanquhar, a

¹ 'There is a Damhead on the western bank of the Polbower Burn, just a short distance above Kirkconnel, but that is on the farm of Netherfarding, and the only likely place on Kirkland was much further up, close to the mouth of Glen Aylmer, which Brown, in his *History of Sanquhar*, gives as the location. Recent inquiry has elicited the fact that in those days the farm of Kirkland included a portion of land now in Netherfarding, and on that portion the Damhead mentioned above is situated.' ('Notes from Nithsdale,' in the *Dumfries Courier*, 27th July, 1898.)

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farmer who was able to appreciate a studious 'herd.' Whilst employed at Corsebank, Hyslop attended evening classes for Latin, Greek, and algebra, conducted by Jonathan Dawson, master of the parish school of Kirkconnel. One day the minister of that parish seeing a work on algebra belonging to Hyslop in the house of the boy's grandfather, an elder of the kirk, inquired, 'What are you going to make of James?' 'I dinna ken,' replied the old man, 'he has great pairts, but what can I do for him?' 'Send him to the plough,' said the minister, thus 'damning' himself to fame. The clergyman's unsympathetic words made Hyslop the more resolute to follow out his studies; and, encouraged by the approbation of Dawson, he manfully fought his way through many difficulties, and at length became a fair classical and mathematical scholar. Resolved to make an attempt to earn a livelihood by teaching, he migrated to Greenock in 1818, and renting an attic in a three-storey house on the northernmost corner of Tobago and Sir Michael Streets, gathered a few pupils. During his residence of about two years in the town of James Watt, Hyslop wrote many lyrics, and gained access to the columns of *The Edinburgh Magazine*, in which his 'The Cameronian Dream' was published in 1821. That same year he obtained through Francis Jeffrey the appointment of tutor on board the *Doris* man-of-war, which was about to proceed to South America. At sea his pen was not laid aside, and on his return from a three years' cruise he published an account of the voyage in *The Edinburgh Magazine*. His premature death took place on 4th November, 1827, while he was cruising off the Cape de Verd Islands in the *Tweed* man-of-war.

A sketch of Hyslop, by Alexander Rodger, Greenock, appeared in *The Scottish Presbyterian* in 1840. Rodger afterwards collected materials for an extended memoir of the poet, but he did not live to make adequate use of them. In 1887 a collection of the 'Muirkirk Shepherd's' poems, edited by the Rev. Peter Mearns, Coldstream, was

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published in Glasgow. Mr. Mearns had ample materials at his command, having found a volume of manuscript poetry which the bard, in preparation for his voyage in the *Tweed*, had conveyed to Sanquhar and committed to the care of Miss Susan Barker, the 'Anna' and 'Lydia' of his numerous love-songs. Among the lyrics printed by Mearns are two that Hyslop did not write—'The Beacon on the Cumbrae Isles' ('The scene was more beautiful far to the eye') and 'The Child's Dream' ('Oh! cradle me on thy knee, Mamma.') The first of these was written by Paul Moon James (1780-1854), and published under the title of 'The Beacon' in his *Poems* (London, 1821): the second, as already stated, was composed by William Millar.

The subject of 'The Cameronian Dream,' the poem on which Hyslop's reputation rests, is the defeat of Richard Cameron by Bruce of Earlshall, at Airdsmoss in 1680. To the peasantry of southern Ayrshire Cameron's grave in the moss where he fell was a sacred place, and picturesque superstitions had gathered round the lonely spot. Passing through Airdsmoss one dark night, John M'Cartney, a young man employed upon the same farm as Hyslop, imagined that he saw at the martyr's grave a chariot of fire. 'The drivers seemed clothed in light, and the heather appeared bending under its burning wheels. As he gazed at it for about the space of half-a-minute, it vanished in a cloud of mist.' In a fever of excitement M'Cartney rushed back to Nether Wellwood, and, arousing the sleeping poet, related to him his singular experience, thus suggesting the most famous of Covenanting lays.

THE CAMERONIAN DREAM.

(Reprinted by permission of Mr. C. L. Wright, Glasgow, from *Poems by James Hyslop* (1887), where the lyric is given according to the author's latest revision as inserted in his MS. book.)

In a dream of the night I was wafted away
To the moorland of mist where the martyrs lay;
Where Cameron's sword and his Bible are seen
Engrav'd on the stone where the heather grows green.

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'Twas a dream of those ages of darkness and blood,
When the minister's home was the mountain and wood,
When in Wellwood's dark moorlands¹ the standard of Sion,
All bloody and torn, 'mong the heather was lying.

It was morning, and summer's young sun from the east
Lay in loving repose on the green mountain's breast;
On Wardlaw, and Cairntable, the clear shining dew
Glisten'd sheen 'mong the heath-bells and mountain-flowers blue.

And far up in heaven, in the white sunny cloud,
The song of the lark was melodious and loud;
And in Glenmuir's wild solitudes, lengthen'd and deep,
Were the whistling of plovers and bleating of sheep.

And Wellwood's sweet valley breath'd music and gladness,
Its fresh meadow blooms hung in beauty and redness;
Its daughters were happy to hail the returning,
And drink the delights of green July's bright morning.

But ah! there were hearts cherish'd far other feelings,
Illum'd by the light of prophetic revealings,
Who drank from the scenery of beauty but sorrow,
For they knew that their blood would bedew it to-morrow.

'Twas the few faithful ones who, with Cameron, were lying
Concealed 'mong the mist, where the heathfowl were crying:
For the horsemen of Earl's-hall around them were hovering,
And their bridle-reins rung through the thin misty covering.

Tho' their faces grew pale, and their swords were unsheath'd,
Yet the vengeance that darken'd their brows was unbreath'd;
With eyes rais'd to heaven in meek resignation,
They sung their last song to the God of Salvation.

The hills with the deep mournful music were ringing,
The curlew and plover in concert were singing;
But the melody died 'midst derision and laughter,
As the hosts of ungodly rush'd on to the slaughter.

Though in mist, and in darkness, and fire they were shrouded,
Yet the souls of the righteous stood calm and unclouded;

¹ "Valley" is sometimes substituted for "moorlands." But the standard of Sion never lay bloody and torn in the valley of Wellwood, which is more than a mile distant from the moorland or morass.—Mearns.

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Their dark eyes flash'd lightning, as, proud and unbending,
They stood like the rock which the thunder is rending.

The muskets were flashing, the blue swords were gleaming,
The helmets were cleft, and the red blood was streaming,
The heavens grew dark, and the thunder was rolling,
When, in Wellwood's dark moorlands, the mighty were falling.

When the righteous had fallen, and the combat had ended,
A chariot of fire through the dark cloud descended,
The drivers were angels on horses of whiteness,
And its burning wheels turn'd upon axles of brightness.

A seraph unfolded its doors bright and shining,
All dazzling like gold of the seventh refining;
And the souls, that came forth out of great tribulation,
Have mounted the chariot and steeds of salvation.

On the arch of the rainbow the chariot is gliding;
Through the paths of the thunder the horsemen are riding;
Glide swiftly, bright spirits, the prize is before ye,
A crown never-fading, a kingdom of glory!

While James Hyslop, in the neighbourhood of the black morass where Richard Cameron died praying and fighting, was planning his one successful poem, Henry Scott Riddell, another Dumfriesshire lad who wore the crook and plaid, was 'singing hymns unbidden' on the sunny slopes of Ettrick. Riddell, whose 'Scotland Yet' is one of the most popular of nineteenth century Scottish lyrics, was born at Sorbie, in the vale of the Ewes, on 23rd September, 1798. When he was about two years of age his family flitted to Langshawburn, in the wilds of Eskdalemuir. Some years later his father tenanted Capplefoot, on the Water of Milk, but not being successful as a farmer, he subsequently entered the service of Scott of Deloraine, an Ettrick farmer, to whom he had acted as shepherd in his younger days. After herding for two years at Deloraine, Henry was hired by Knox of Todrig, whose son William, author of the lyric 'Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud,' discovering that the boy had a talent for verse-making, paid him much friendly

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attention. Resolved to qualify for the ministry, Riddell at length gave up his situation and entered the parish school of Biggar, whence he passed to Edinburgh University. In 1833 he was appointed to the chapel of ease at Caerlanrig or Teviothead, in the parish of Cavers. There he scarcely enjoyed that 'competent portion of the good things of this life,' which, according to the Shorter Catechism, is asked by those who use the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, for his salary did not exceed £52 a year, and no house had been provided for the preacher. 'Travelling nine miles to the scene of my official duties,' he writes, 'it was frequently my hap to preach in a very uncomfortable condition, when, indeed, the wet would be pouring from my arms on the Bible before me, and oozing over my shoes when the foot was stirred on the pulpit floor.'¹ But though he had disadvantages to contend with, Riddell's life passed tranquilly enough at Teviothead till 1841, when he showed symptoms of insanity, and was placed in the Crichton Royal Institution at Dumfries, where he slowly regained his mental serenity. He died at Teviothead on 30th July, 1870, and was buried in

'Yon churchyard that lonely is lying
Beneath the deep greenwood of Teviot's wild strand.'²

Riddell's first book, *Songs of the Ark, with other Poems*, appeared in 1831. In 1844 he published *The Christian Politician, or the Right Way of Thinking*, and in 1847, *Poems, Songs, and Miscellaneous Pieces*. A few years later he translated *St. Matthew's Gospel* and the *Psalms* into 'Lowland Scotch' at the request of Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte, who printed some copies of each work for private circulation. An edition of Riddell's poetical works, with a memoir by Dr. James Brydon, Hawick, was published in Glasgow in 1871; and to commemorate the centenary of the poet's birth, a volume of selections

¹ MS. Autobiography quoted by C. Rogers in *Modern Scottish Minstrel*, vol. iv. p. 40.

² Riddell's 'The Admonition.'

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from his poems, with a biographical sketch by the Rev. W. S. Crockett, minister of Tweedsmuir, was issued at Hawick in 1898.

Among the best of Riddell's lyrics are 'Scotland Yet,' 'Ours is the Land of Gallant Hearts,' a version of 'The Crook and Plaid,' and 'The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow.' It is mainly by reason of the stirring patriotic lay, 'Scotland Yet,' that Riddell survives. Equal to it in merit, though not nearly so widely known, is 'The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow,' a lyric in which the spirit of Border romance is finely caught.

SCOTLAND YET.

Gae, bring my guid auld harp ance mair,
Gae, bring it free and fast,
For I maun sing anither sang,
Ere a' my glee be past ;
And trow ye as I sing, my lads,
The burden o't shall be,
Auld Scotland's howes, and Scotland's knowes,
And Scotland's hills for me ;
I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the honours three.

The heath waves wild upon her hills,
And, foaming frae the fells,
Her fountains sing o' freedom still,
As they dance down the dells ;
And weel I lo'e the land, my lads,
That's girded by the sea ;
Then Scotland's vales, and Scotland's dales,
And Scotland's hills for me ;
I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the honours three.

The thistle wags upon the fields
Where Wallace bore his blade,
That gave her foeman's dearest bluid
To dye her auld gray plaid ;
And looking to the lift, my lads,
He sang this doughty glee,
Auld Scotland's right, and Scotland's might,
And Scotland's hills for me ;

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I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the honours three.

They tell o' lands wi' brighter skies,
Where Freedom's voice ne'er rang ;
Gi' me the hills where Ossian lies,
And Coila's Minstrel sang,
For I've nae skill o' lands, my lads,
That ken na to be free ;
Then Scotland's right, and Scotland's might,
And Scotland's hills for me ;
I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the honours three.

THE DOWIE DENS O' YARROW.

Oh, sister, there are midnight dreams
That pass not with the morning,
Then ask not why my reason swims
In a brain sae wildl'y burning ;
And ask not why I fancy how
Yon wee bird sings wi' sorrow,
For bluid lies mingled wi' the dew
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

My dream's wild light was not o' night,
Nor o' the dulefu' morning ;
Thrice on the stream was seen the gleam
That seem'd his sprite returning :
For sword-girt men came down the glen,
An hour before the morrow,
And pierced the heart aye true to mine,
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

Oh, there are red, red drops o' dew
Upon the wild flower's blossom,
But they couldna cool my burning brow,
And shall not stain my bosom ;
But from the clouds o' yon dark sky
A cold, cold shroud I'll borrow,
And long and deep shall be my sleep
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

This form the bluid-dyed flower shall press
By the heart o' him that lo'ed me ;

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And I'll steal frae his lips a long, long kiss,
In the bower where aft he wooed me ;
For my arms shall fold and my tresses shield
The form o' my death-cold marrow,
When the breeze shall bring the raven's wing
O'er the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

The name of Sir John Malcolm, who, like Riddell, was a native of eastern Dumfriesshire, has not yet appeared in any work on Scottish poetry. Nevertheless, he often invoked the Muse both in this country and abroad ; and the shorter pieces printed in his *Miscellaneous Poems*, a volume published at Bombay, reveal the touch of the true lyricist.

The fourth son of George Malcolm, tenant of Burnfoot, in the parish of Westerkirk, John Malcolm was born on 2nd May, 1769. He entered the Madras army in 1783, won high distinction at the siege of Seringapatam, and in the last year of the century was despatched by the Governor-General of India, Lord Wellesley, on a mission to the Court of Persia. In 1817 Malcolm displayed his military skill at the Battle of Mehidpoor, in which Holkar's army suffered a disastrous defeat. He returned to England, laden with honours, in 1822 ; but a few years later went out again to India, as Governor of Bombay. After his final return from the East, Sir John sat in the House of Commons as Member for Launceston, and in 1832 his vote was cast against the Reform Bill. He died in London on 30th May, 1833.

The distinguished officer's fame was materially enhanced by his books, *The History of Persia* (1815), *A Memoir of Central India* (1823), *The Political History of India from 1784 to 1823* (1826), *Sketches of Persia* (1827), and *The Life of Robert, Lord Clive* (1836). His posthumous biography of the victor of Plassey, a work based on family papers communicated by the Earl of Powis, was reviewed by Macaulay in a contribution to *The Edinburgh Review* that remains the most brilliant historical essay in the English language.

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Malcolm's single book of verse, a tiny volume of seventy-five pages, was published in 1829, under the title of *Miscellaneous Poems, by Sir J—— M——*. Perhaps the best piece in the collection is the following lament for John Leyden, the author of 'Scenes of Infancy,' who died at Batavia in 1811 :

'Where sleep the brave on Java's strand,
Thy ardent spirit, Leyden ! fled ;
And Fame with cypress shades the land
Where Genius fell, and Valour bled.

When triumph's tale is westward borne,
On Border Hills no joy shall gleam ;
And thy lov'd Teviot long shall mourn
The youthful minstrel of her stream.

Near Jura's rocks the Mermaid's strain
Shall change from glad to solemn lay ;
For he is gone, the youthful swain,
Who sung the Maid of Colonsay.

The hardy Tar, Britannia's pride,
Shall hang his manly head in woe ;
The Bard who told how Nelson died,
With harp unstrung, in earth lies low.

I see a weeping band arise,
I hear sad music on the gale ;
Thy dirge is sung from Scotia's skies,
Her mountain sons their loss bewail.

The Minstrel of thy native North
Pours all his soul into the song ;
It bursts from near the winding Forth,
And Highland rocks the notes prolong.

Yes ! he who struck a matchless lyre
O'er Flodden's field and Katrine's wave,
With trembling hand now leads the choir,
That mourns his Leyden's early grave.'

In the year that Sir John Malcolm died, *The Vale of Esk*, a volume of verse by William Park, a native of Westerkirk, was issued by Blackwood. At the

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date of its publication, the author of the book was 'minister's man' to the Rev. Dr. Brown of Eskdalemuir, but on the death of his employer in 1835, he became a farmer. He died at Holmains, Dalton, a farm of which he had become joint tenant, on 5th June, 1843.

The first two stanzas of 'The Vale of Esk' will fairly represent a poem of considerable length, modestly presented to the public as a work written 'during intervals of relaxation from manual labour' by a 'person of small pretensions to learning, or natural abilities':¹

'Vale of the pastoral Esk—my native vale !
Ye breezy hills, and thou transparent stream,
A-down whose willow banks at twilight pale
I wander, musing on some mazy dream ;
Where oft, with spirit unperplex'd and hale,
I stray'd in youth, ere care became my theme—
Transparent stream, high hills and healthful fields,
Receive the homage which my fancy yields !

O, could I from the distant past recall
The fairy scenes that caught my youthful view !
O, could I weave again the golden pall
My fond imagination o'er thee threw,
Lov'd valley ! ere I tasted sorrow's gall,
While yet my heart was young, and life was new,—
My verse should like thy vernal morning glow,
And like thy waters, musically flow.'

'The Heliotrope, or A Pilgrim in Pursuit of Health,' a Dumfriesshire poem which gained more readers than Park's 'Vale of Esk,' also appeared in 1833. Dr. William Beattie, the author of the work, was born in Dalton Parish in 1793. Passing from Clarencefield School, in the Parish of Ruthwell, to Edinburgh University, he there received the degree of M.D. in 1820. After prosecuting his studies for some time on the Continent, he settled in London as a doctor, and soon had a good practice. Among his patients were two poets who had won from Byron a praise denied to loftier singers—

¹ Preface to *The Vale of Esk*.

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Thomas Campbell and Samuel Rogers. It is chiefly on account of his association with Campbell that Dr. Beattie is still remembered. In 1842 'The Pilgrim of Glencoe' was dedicated to him 'in remembrance of long-subsisting and mutual friendship,' and in 1844 he performed the melancholy duty of closing Campbell's eyes. Beattie's *The Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell* appeared in 1849. He survived his friend more than thirty years, dying in 1875, aged eighty-two.

Beattie published four books of poetry, *John Huss* (1829); *The Heliotrope, or A Pilgrim in Pursuit of Health* (1833), a work which was greatly enlarged in a third edition; *Polynesia, or Missionary Toils and Triumphs in the South Seas* (1839); and *Farewell to the Highlands, and other Pieces* (N.D.).

A few lines from a 'Monody on the Death of Thomas Campbell,' first printed in Wilson's *The Poets and Poetry of Scotland*, are here given as a sample of Dr. Beattie's verse :

'Friends of the poet ! ye to whom belong
The prophet's fire, the mystic powers of song—
On *you* devolves the sad and sacred trust
To chant the requiem o'er a brother's dust !
His kindred shade demands the kindred tear—
The poet's homage o'er a poet's bier !
While *I*—who saw the vital flame expire,
And heard the last tones of that broken lyre—
Closed the dim eye, and propp'd the drooping head—
And caught the spirit's farewell as it fled—
With your high notes my lowly tribute blend,
And mourn at once the poet and the friend !'

John Palmer, another Annandale poet, seems to claim a word of recognition. He was born at Annan in 1800, and was educated at Brydekirk under William Smith, a dominie whose strap was quite as effective as that of the more famous Adam Hope. In youth Palmer became a travelling agent for Blackie & Fullarton, publishers, and so successful were his efforts as a canvasser that 'he did not think he had done a fair week's work if he had

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hardly deserve notice in a work on the Poets of Dumfriesshire, for most of their pieces are sad doggerel ; but the writer of this book knows that he would be accused of eccentricity of taste if he ventured to ignore two 'poetesses' who have figured in various works of reference.

Miss Hawkins was born in 1787 'near the famed camp of Burnswark, where the brave Caledonians fought against the Romans.'¹ Her father, a respectable blacksmith, sent her to school, but as soon as the precocious child could 'read and understand the Word of God,' she was withdrawn and 'engaged to tend cattle and take care of children.' While Susannah herded her master's cattle on the green slope of Burnswark, 'The Muse,' as she quaintly says, 'first inspired her to wish to sing the praises of the great God'; and soon the 'herd lassie' was lilting original psalms, which doubtless were heard in heaven, for :

'If the heart be moved,
Although the Verse be somewhat scant,
God doth supply the want.'²

When about forty years of age, Miss Hawkins called on the proprietor of the *Courier*, and asked him to publish her 'Works.' Interested in the woman, M'Diarmid agreed to print some of her pieces, and *The Poetical Works of Susannah Hawkins* appeared in 1829. So many copies of the book were sold that, in 1832, the gratified authoress published a second volume—almost a reprint of the first—under the comparatively modest title of *The Poems and Songs of Susannah Hawkins*.

After the publication of Volume II., she was engaged

¹ *The Poetical Works of Susannah Hawkins*, 1829 (Introduction). As originally written, Susannah's words were: 'I was born near the famed camp of Burnswark, where the brave Caledonians fought against the *Roman Catholics*'; but, on the suggestion of John M'Diarmid, her publisher, the sentence was altered to its present form—'just for the sake of brevity,' as he remarked with the fine wit and finer courtesy of a gentleman born in the eighteenth century.

² George Herbert: 'A True Hymn.'

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as a domestic servant by Halliday, the schoolmaster of Mouswald Parish, who kindly gave her lessons in grammar and composition. It is said that at the close of the course she exclaimed, 'I'm a gran' grammarer noo!'

Eight other volumes were published by Susannah, who for more than thirty years supported herself by selling from house to house her collections of doggerel. Even in Bœotian regions the good woman was regarded as a 'character' rather than a genius; but her answer to the impertinent critics who sometimes tormented her was universally allowed to be effective:

'Some say I canna rhyme indeed,
By Burns's works I do come speed—
For them I dinna care indeed
What they do say;
My simple Muse she doth me feed,
Day after day.'¹

The 'Annandale Poetess' professed a warm admiration for 'Brother Burns.' On visiting Ayr she made a pilgrimage to the famous monument on the banks of the Doon, and after walking round it, cried in her excitement, 'Hech, sirs, an' this is what they do wi' *us* when we are deid!'

Susannah's final volume was produced in 1867, when she had reached the age of eighty; and in March, 1868, she died, through an accident, in her own cottage at Relief, and was buried in Ecclefechan Churchyard. To this day her name is the abhorrence of young Annandale poets, for when any ingenious youth between Moffat and Annan ventures to print his first ode he is sure to be assailed with the cry:

'What! what!
Sue come again? No more—no more of that!'

Janet Douglas Fraser, stocking weaver, Penpont, was born in 1777, most probably in the parish of Closeburn,

¹*The Poems and Songs of Susannah Hawkins* (Dumfries, 1841), vol. v. p. 27.

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where her father, William Fraser, who belonged to an old Covenanting family, was a joiner. At the Disruption, when the late Duke of Buccleuch refused to grant a site in Morton for a Free Church, Janet, though not herself an adherent of the new Kirk, but a Seceder, presented the followers of Chalmers with the piece of ground on which Virginhall Church now stands. The deed which conveyed the property bears a docquet in these words: 'The deed of gift is to be as free from henceforth to the Free Church as I wish the heavenly mansion to be made to me, and to last the property of the Free Church while Sun, Moon, and Stars endure.'¹ 'It was discovered after the building was begun,' writes the Rev. David Black, 'that the ground was not a proper square or parallelogram, and so the south wall was rounded in about eighteen inches so as not to encroach on the Duke's property, and the rounded corner is known to this day as "The Duke of Buccleuch's Elbow," or "The Crookit Wa'."'²

The story of Janet and her 'kailyard' delighted Thomas Carlyle, who, on hearing of her death, which occurred in 1855, wrote some pithy sentences about 'a lump of an old woman, half haveral, half genius, called Jenny Fraser.'³ Froude, unaware that she could boast of ancestors who had fought for 'Kirk and Presbytrie,' and thinking only of her spiritual descent, remarked that she was 'a true daughter of the Covenanters.'⁴

Copies of Janet Fraser's three little volumes of religious verse may still be found in the cottages of pious Nithsdale shepherds. Her lines 'On Reading Ralph Erskine's

¹ Deed of Gift in custody of the Rev. David Black, minister of Virginhall or East Penpont United Free Church, to whom the writer is indebted for most of his information about the rhymster. The docquet is in Janet Fraser's own vigorous hand-writing.

² Letter dated 14th December, 1905.

³ Froude, *Carlyle's Life in London*, vol. i. p. 321.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 322.

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Paraphrase on the Song of Solomon ' are at least marked by fervour :

'I come, my glorious mate, I come,
My heart pants at thy word ;
O give my soul a holy crumb
Of love to thee, my Lord.

If thou be strongly bent to gain
My full and free consent,
Thy shafts of love to my heart aim,
I am right well content.'

IX

CARLYLE AND HIS CIRCLE

THAT Thomas Carlyle, the most powerful and widely influential of Victorian writers, was fundamentally a poet is attested by all his works, from the early *Miscellanies* to the sketch of *Jane Welsh Carlyle*, a fragment 'written as in star-fire and immortal tears.' His strong imagination, and that almost painfully acute sense of the spiritual side of life which led him to exclaim when walking in Regent Street, 'To me, through these thin cobwebs, Death and Eternity sit glaring', are revealed in *Sartor Resartus*, his first great book, in a hundred sentences like these :

'We start out of Nothingness, take figure, and are Apparitions ; round us, as round the veriest spectre, is Eternity ; and to Eternity minutes are as years and æons. Come there not tones of Love and Faith, as from celestial harp-strings, like the Song of beatified Souls ? And again, do not we squeak and jibber (in our discordant, screech-owlish debatings and recriminatings) ; and glide bodeful, and feeble, and fearful ; or uproar (*poltern*), and revel in our mad Dance of the Dead—till the scent of the morning air summons us to our still Home ; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day ?'¹

The *French Revolution*, the most artistic of Carlyle's productions, has the plan not of a history but of an epic. In the words of Mr. Frederic Harrison, 'Its "argument" and its "books" ; its contrasts and "episodes" ; its

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, book III. chap. viii.

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grouping of characters and denouement—are as carefully elaborated as the *Gerusalemme* of Tasso or the *Æneid* of Virgil.¹ In spirit, as well as in plan, the ‘French Revolution’ is a poem; and every page of the work contains sentences which no mere prose writer could have penned. The art of intensifying effects by the aid of contrasts—an art thoroughly understood only by poets—was never more skilfully used than in this famous apostrophe :

‘O evening sun of July, how, at this hour, thy beams fall slant on reapers amid peaceful woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships far out in the silent main; on Balls at the Orangerie of Versailles, where high-rouged Dames of the Palace are even now dancing with double jacketed Hussar officers;—and also on this roaring Hell-porch of a Hôtel-de-Ville!’²

Cromwell is but a collection of the letters and speeches of a practical man, united by a continuous narrative: yet, as Green remarks, it shows the ‘genius of a poet’ as unmistakably as the ‘care of an antiquarian.’³ The following sentence, in which the editor deals with a reference in one of Cromwell’s letters, produces the effect of a dainty and tender lyric :

‘Mrs. St. John came down to breakfast every morning in that summer visit of the year 1638, and Sir William said grave grace, and they spake polite devout things to one another; and they are vanished, they and their things and speeches,—all silent, like the echoes of the old nightingales that sang that season, like the blossoms of the old roses. O Death, O Time!’⁴

Even in the unstudied compositions of Carlyle there are many sentences steeped in poetry. The present volume does not contain any fragment of verse richer in poetical

¹ ‘Carlyle’s Place in Literature’ (in *The Forum*, July, 1894).

² *History of the French Revolution*, part i. book v. chap. vii.

³ *Short History of the English People*, p. 530.

⁴ *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches*, vol. i. part 1.

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qualities than this extract from a hastily-penned letter to John Sterling :

‘ One night, late, I rode through the village where I was born. The old kirkyard tree, a huge old gnarled ash, was nestling itself softly against the great twilight in the north. A star or two looked out, and the old graves were all there, and my father and my sister ; and God was above us all.’¹

Though Carlyle was indubitably a ‘makar’ in the broad sense, his metrical performances are disappointing. ‘The deep undertones of his music,’ says Froude, ‘could not modulate themselves under rhyme and metre.’² Yet Carlyle was never commonplace in his poetical musings ; and, defective though most of his pieces may be in point of art, they have all a certain pith and interest. His rendering of part of Goethe’s ‘Helena,’ in the metre of the original, and the translation in *Past and Present* of the same author’s ‘Mason-Lodge,’ a poem which, Froude tells us, ‘was on Carlyle’s lips to the last days of his life,’ are both adequate ; and though Swinburne, with the songs of Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd in his heart, may have been justified in withholding his admiration from the hackneyed lines about the dawn of ‘another blue day,’ it will hardly be disputed that ‘The Sower’s Song’ has the swing and melody of a genuine lyric.

Thomas Carlyle was the eldest son of James Carlyle, builder, by his second wife, Margaret Aitken, and was born, on 4th December, 1795, in the ‘Arch House’ at Ecclefechan, in a room at the top of the stair on the right hand side. His native village, the ‘Entepfuhl’ of *Sartor Resartus*, is not greatly altered in its exterior semblance since the close of the eighteenth century. The heights which surround it are as bosky as ever, the Kumbach still ‘gushes kindly by’—where not covered over—and one or two of the old trees of the hamlet remain, though the great linden

¹ *Carlyle’s Life in London* (Froude), i. p. 110.

² *First Forty Years*, vol. ii. p. 476.

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under the boughs of which young men and maidens often danced to flute music has long disappeared.

James Carlyle belonged to the Burgher communion, and had all the stern integrity of character and deep respect for learning of a typical Scottish seceder. The old meeting-house where the Reverend John Johnston—'the priestliest man' Thomas Carlyle ever knew¹—preached Sunday after Sunday to a little band of dissenters, is now converted into a tenement of dwelling-houses. It was a poor temple with a thatched roof: nevertheless to James Carlyle and his family it always seemed bright with 'sacred lambencies, tongues of authentic flame from heaven.'²

On a 'red, sunny Whitsuntide morning' in 1805 Thomas Carlyle was taken by his father to Annan Academy, a school which had recently come into existence through an endowment set apart by the burgesses of Annan on the division among them of a vast common. 'Hinterschlag Gymnasium,' now a dwelling-house occupied by Miss Batty, daughter of the late Provost Batty, is a large dark building—one of those houses which Dorothy Wordsworth, that queen of landscape-painters with the pen, had in her keen observant eye when she wrote the graphic description of Annan in her *Tour*. Within its walls young Carlyle endured much suffering, for his rough schoolfellows, imagining that he was a mere book-worm, 'flouted him, beat him, jeered and tweaked and tortured him by a thousand cunning arts,'³ till, goaded to fury, he turned on his persecutors with effect.

In November, 1809, Carlyle was sent to Edinburgh University, where his ability as a mathematician attracted some notice. He returned to Annan in 1814, having

¹ *Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle* (Froude), vol. i. p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 86.

³ From 'Wotton Reinfred,' an unfinished novel by Carlyle, published for the first time in the *New Review*, 1892. The passage quoted above undoubtedly gives his personal experiences at Annan Academy. The references to his unhappy schooldays in *Sartor Resartus* and the *Reminiscences* are well known.

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obtained by competition the post of teacher of mathematics in his old school. While at the Academy as a tutor he boarded with the Burgher minister, Mr. Glen, who in the *Reminiscences* receives the praise due to modest worth. During his schooldays Carlyle had been boarded with a relative of his own, John Waugh, the 'Hans Wachtel' of *Sartor Resartus*.¹ Of himself as a teacher at Annan he writes: 'I was abundantly lonesome, uncomfortable, and out of place there.'² But though the thriving shopkeepers of the little market town did not invite him to their houses he found two hospitable friends in the neighbourhood—the Rev. Henry Duncan of Ruthwell and Mr. Church of Hitchell.

Before he had attained the age of twenty-one, Carlyle was placed in charge of a school at Kirkcaldy which had been started in opposition to one conducted by Edward Irving. For Kirkcaldy Carlyle had a genuine liking; but he tired of 'schoolmastering,' and in 1818 removed to Edinburgh, resolved to try a literary career. The Rev. Henry Duncan sent him a letter of introduction to Dr. Brewster, afterwards Sir David, who engaged him on the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*. In 1823-24 his *Life of Friedrich Schiller* appeared in the *London Magazine*, to the proprietor of which he had been recommended by Irving, now settled in London. 'Schiller' was quickly followed by a translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, brought out by an Edinburgh publisher. A letter from Goethe acknowledging in graceful terms a copy of the work seemed to the translator 'like a message from fairyland.'

In an article in the second half-yearly volume of *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine* there is a reference to Carlyle which shows how highly his abilities were rated by his Dumfriesshire literary friends as far back as 1826:

'Mr. Carlyle, the translator of *Wilhelm Meister*, and

¹ Happily Mr. Glen's house, afterwards the U.P. manse, and Hans Wachtel's humble cottage in Greencroft Wynd are both extant, though the present writer had difficulty in identifying the latter.

² *Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 90.

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author of the *Life of Schlegel*,¹ is engaged upon a work entitled *Specimens of the German Novelists*. Two out of four volumes are, I hear, already through the press. Great expectations may be reasonably formed of this work ; for Carlyle, a man of almost first-rate talent, is, beyond question, the best translator we have. He has, perhaps, greater command over the English language, and can mould it more successfully to every purpose of composition, than any author of the present day. It can only be said in his disfavour, that he occasionally *commits peculiarities of style*. What I mean by this is, that he affects (for I do not suppose him incapable of avoiding such faults) a few outre words of phraseology.²

German Romance, the book announced in the article quoted, was dedicated to James Carlyle, though his son knew that 'he would not read a line of it.' Financially the work proved a failure, but a few words of encouragement from Goethe helped the author to bear his disappointment with equanimity.

In October, 1826, Carlyle married Jane Baillie Welsh, only daughter of Dr. Welsh, Haddington, a descendant of John Knox. He had been introduced to Miss Welsh by Edward Irving in 1821, and he had long wooed her with ardour.³

Craigenputtock, in the parish of Dunscore, became the residence of Carlyle at Whitsunday, 1828. It was there that he wrote *Sartor Resartus*, a work too original to receive immediate popular recognition. At Craigenputtock he also produced some of his best poetical translations, including 'Helena' and 'Luther's Psalm.' 'My Own Four Walls' and 'The Sigh' are among the original

¹ *Schiller's Life* is meant.

² *The Dumfries Monthly Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 419. To that periodical Carlyle contributed a translation from Bürger and two original poems on 'A Thunder-Storm.'

³ The remarkable letters which passed between Carlyle and Miss Welsh during their courtship have just been published under the title, *The Love Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh*.

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poems that belong to the period of his residence in Dunscore. The faith and reverence of the recluse are as fully disclosed in these lines from 'The Sigh' as anywhere in *Sartor Resartus*:

'Lone stands our home amid the sullen moor,
Its threshold by few friendly feet betrod ;
Yet *we* are here, we two, still true though poor :
And this, too, is *the world*—the "city of God !"

O'erhangs us not the infinitude of sky,
Where all the starry lights revolve and shine ?
Does not that universe within us lie
And move—its Maker or itself divine ?'

If Carlyle had been content to write books similar in character to *Sartor Resartus* he could have found no more suitable dwelling-place than Craigenputtock. But he was ambitious to produce a great history; and it was necessary for his purpose to have constant access to the material stored in the British Museum. Accordingly he left the 'Crag of the Hawks,' and established himself at 5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea—a change heartily approved by Mrs. Carlyle, who had no liking for 'peat-moss and isolation.' In September, 1834, a few months after his removal to London, Carlyle began his *History of the French Revolution*, which appeared in 1837. The progress of this work was hindered by the accidental destruction of the MS. of the first volume while it was in the hands of John Stuart Mill, to whom it had been lent. When informed that the fruit of nearly half a year's crushing toil had vanished, Carlyle behaved with a magnanimity beyond praise. He pretended to Mill that he could afford to take the matter lightly; and when left alone with Mrs. Carlyle, his first words were, 'Well, Mill, poor fellow, is terribly cut up; we must endeavour to hide from him how very serious this business is to us.'

In 1841 Carlyle published *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, and in 1843 *Past and Present*. His *Life and Letters of Oliver Cromwell*, which presents an extraordinarily vivid and

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searching portrait of the great Puritan soldier, appeared in 1845. It was followed in 1850 by *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, in which Carlyle poured contempt on the philanthropic ideals of the age, and in 1851 by a life of his friend John Sterling. Soon after the publication of that biography he resolved to adopt as the subject of his next work Frederick of Prussia, though he well knew that to write on the 'greatest of modern men' would involve the careful examination of enormous masses of unattractive material and the study of military science. *Friedrich II.* was begun in 1853, and for more than twelve years it absorbed his energy and devastated his happiness. 'Sure enough,' he writes, 'I did stand by that dismal task with all my time and all my means; day and night wrestling with it, as with the ugliest dragon which blotted out all the daylight and the rest of the world to me, till I should get it slain.'¹ Carlyle's toil was not in vain, the book which was the outcome of such painful efforts being one of the best of English histories. It shows a rare capacity for research, a keen perception of what is vital in history and a marvellous faculty for the seizure of picturesque incidents. Emerson, who was personally acquainted with Carlyle, having visited him at Craigenputtock and in London, said that the English people after reading *Friedrich* should have 'thanked the author for it by cordial acclamation, and signified, by crowning him with oak-leaves, their joy that such a head existed among them.'

The historian's brow was not decked with oak-leaves; but he received a distinction which should have been conferred on him years before. In 1865 he was elected to succeed Gladstone as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University; and on 2nd April, 1866, he delivered the customary Inaugural Address, which, though nominally on the 'Choice of Books,' was really an account of his own intellectual development. After a few days spent in Edinburgh, Carlyle went to Dumfriesshire to visit his relations and enjoy the country stillness. On 21st April,

¹ *Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle* (Froude), vol. ii. p. 261.

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when staying at the house of his sister, Mrs. Aitken, at Dumfries, he received a telegram informing him of Mrs. Carlyle's sudden death as she was driving in Hyde Park. From the effect of the blow which thus fell upon him the old man never quite recovered. The tribute to his wife's memory in the *Reminiscences* is the most important work written by him after her death. The melancholy which for Carlyle painted the skies 'bleared,' and made the sunsets 'wae,' finds marvellous expression in *Jane Welsh Carlyle*, and the record is full of sentences unequalled for throbbing pathos. In a wiser age than ours the literary value of the sketch will be as widely recognised as the interest which it possesses as a human document.

In his latter years Carlyle was cheered by the companionship of his niece Miss Mary Carlyle Aitken, afterwards the wife of Mr. Alexander Carlyle. In 1874 he was offered by Disraeli the Grand Cross of the Bath, the highest distinction for merit at the Queen's command, but this he gratefully declined. Carlyle died on 5th February, 1881, and was buried in the rural Churchyard at Ecclefechan, where he has now lain for more than a quarter of a century, unheeding,

'The storms of praise and blame
That blur with mist his lustrous name.'

As specimens of Carlyle's poetry the translation of Goethe's 'Mason-Lodge' and three characteristic original pieces may be given. 'Drumwhirn Bridge'—perhaps the best of the lyrics selected—was published anonymously in *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, in 1834, under the title of 'Drumwhinn Bridge,' the Galloway word *Drumwhirn* being misprinted. In 1881 the poem was reproduced from the *London Journal* by the Rev. W. H. Wylie, who felt justified in attributing it to Carlyle, though he was unable to adduce any external evidence in favour of the ascription.¹ The present writer can now prove what has hitherto been only conjectured—that Carlyle composed 'Drumwhirn

¹ See Wylie's *Thomas Carlyle: The Man and his Books*, p. 229.

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Bridge.' At Craigenputtock the lyric was taken down from the lips of the poet—who distinctly acknowledged the authorship—by his friend the late Archibald Glen, brother of William Glen, a gifted young barrister who taught Carlyle Greek; and to Mrs. Graham, Kilbarchan, the daughter of the transcriber, the writer of this book is indebted for his copy of the piece. Mrs. Graham's MS. is marked, 'November, 1832'—evidently the date not of transcription but of composition, as the printed copy bears the same date. Archibald Glen spent a fortnight at Craigenputtock in January, 1834, and probably it was then that he took down Carlyle's verses.

DRUMWHIRN BRIDGE.

Built 1832.

(From MS. copy taken down by the late Mr. Archibald Glen, from the recitation of Carlyle at Craigenputtock. Drumwhirn is in the parish of Balmaclellan, Kirkcudbrightshire.)

Meek Autumn midnight glancing,
The stars above hold sway;
I bend, in Muse advancing,
To lonesome Orr¹ my way.

Its rush in drowsy even
Can make the waste less dead:
Short pause beneath void heaven,
Then back again to bed!

Ho, ho! 'mong deserts moory,
See here the craftsman's hand;
Raise now, Black Orr,² thy fury,
On whinstone arch I stand.

Dull Orr, thou moorland river
By man's eye rarely seen,
Yet gushest on for ever
And wert while Earth has been.

¹ Orr Water, or Urr Water, issues from Loch Urr, and for some miles it holds its course through a wild district.

² 'Bleak Orr' in the previously published copy.

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There o'er thy crags and gravel,
Thou sing'st an unknown song ;
In Tongue no clerks unravel !
Thou'st sung it long and long.

From Being's source *it* bounded,
The morn when time began :
Since, thro' this moor has sounded,
Unheard or heard of man.

That day they cross'd the Jordan
When Hebrew trumpets rang,
Thy wave no foot was fording
Yet here in moor it sang.

And I, while thou'st meandered,
Was not, have come to be,
Apart so long we wandered,
This moment met with thee.

Old Orr, thou mystic water,
No Ganges holier is ;
That was Creation's daughter ;
What was it fashioned this ?

The whinstone bridge is builded,
Will hang a hundred year ;
When bridge to Time has yielded,
The brook will still be here.

Farewell, poor moorland river,
We parted and we met :
Thy journeyings are for ever,
Mine are not ended yet.

November, 1832.

MY OWN FOUR WALLS.

(From MS. copy taken down by the late Mr. Archibald Glen, from the recitation of Carlyle at Craigenputtock, probably in January, 1834.)

The storm and night are on the waste,
Wild thro' the wind the herdsman calls,
As fast on willing nag I haste
Home to my own four walls.

Black tossing clouds with scarce a glimmer
Envelope Earth like sevenfold palls ;

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But Wife-kin watches, coffee-pot doth simmer,
Home in mine own four walls.

A home and wife I too have got,
A hearth to blaze whate'er befalls;
What needs a man that I have not¹
Within my own four walls?

King George has palaces of pride,
And armed grooms must ward their halls;
With one stout bolt I safe abide
Within my own four walls.

Not all his men may sever this,
It yields to friends', not monarchs' calls;
My whinstone house my castle is,
I have my own four walls.

When fools or knaves make any rout,
With gigmen, dinners, balls, cabals,
I turn my back and shut them out:
These are my own four walls.

A moorland house, though rude it be,
May stand the brunt when prouder falls;
'Twill screen my wife, my books, and me,
All in my own four walls.

THE SOWER'S SONG.

(From 'Fractions,' in *Miscellanies*, vol. iii.)

Now hands to seedsheet, boys,
We step and we cast; old Time's on wing;
And would ye partake of Harvest's joys,
The corn must be sown in Spring.
*Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.*

Old Earth is a pleasure to see
In sunshiny cloak of red and green;

¹ In Froude's copy of the poem this line has a redundant syllable:
'What *wanteth* a man that I have not.'

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The furrow lies fresh ; this Year will be
As Years that are past have been.

Fall gently, etc.

Old Mother, receive this corn,
The son of Six Thousand golden sires :
All these on thy kindly breast were born ;
One more thy poor child requires.

Fall gently, etc.

Now steady and sure again,
And measure of stroke and step we keep ;
Thus up and thus down we cast our grain :
Sow well, and you gladly reap.

*Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed ;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.*

GOETHE'S 'MASON-LODGE.'

(From *Past and Present*, book III. chap. xv.)

The Mason's ways are
A type of Existence,
And his persistence
Is as the days are
Of men in this world.

The Future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow ;
We press till thorow,
Nought that abides in it
Daunting us,—onward.

And solemn before us,
Veiled, the dark Portal,
Goal of all mortal :—
Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent !

While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error,
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.

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But heard are the Voices,
Heard are the Sages,
The Worlds and the Ages :
'Choose well ; your choice is
Brief and yet endless :

Here eyes do regard you,
In Eternity's stillness ;
Here is all fulness,
Ye brave, to reward you ;
Work, and despair not.'

Edward Irving, the chief friend of Carlyle's youth, and the 'freest, brotherliest, bravest, human soul his ever came in contact with,' was a sonneteer ; though, like his companion, he had more command of melody when writing prose than when engaged in the composition of verse. Born at Annan on 4th August, 1792, he was the second son of Gavin Irving, tanner, who for some years filled the office of bailie,¹ and of Mary Lowther, a great granddaughter of the Rev. Thomas Howie, minister of Annan from 1703 to 1753. Young Irving was educated at Annan Academy² and at Edinburgh University. In 1810 he became teacher of mathematics in a school at Haddington, and entered upon an engagement to give private lessons every morning to Jane Baillie Welsh. Removing in 1812 to Kirkcaldy, he there gained the heart of his future wife, Isabella Martin, a lady better fitted for the companionship of a profoundly religious man than Miss Welsh, who was her rival in his affection. While at Kirkcaldy he studied in private for the ministry, and in 1819, having been licensed to preach, he was appointed assistant to Dr. Chalmers, then in Glasgow.

¹ The greatness of the distinction enjoyed by Gavin Irving may be inferred from the fact that an Annan bailie once found it necessary to remind the burgesses that after all he was 'a mere man.'

² William Dalgleish, a fine scholar, was then rector of the Academy. Mrs. Oliphant does not mention him in her biography of Irving, and seems to have believed that Adam Hope was headmaster.

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Irving went to London as a Presbyterian minister in 1822, and soon his popularity as a preacher became unbounded. Eminent statesmen and authors acknowledged the genius of the young Borderer: every Sunday the chapel in which he proclaimed the judgments of Heaven with a seer's force of conviction was crowded with people of fashion. But, like a true prophet, Irving was yet to encounter opposition, and have bitter experience of outward failure. His simple and fervent faith inclined him to look for miraculous manifestations of Divine power, and he was incapable of submitting to a rigorous test the curious phenomena that soon presented themselves around him. Hysterical women were permitted to 'speak with tongues' in church, and he was unable to check the scenes of disorder that arose. In vital matters of doctrine also, Irving's nature led him to assume a dangerous position. Once, when sailing on the *Gareloch*, he exclaimed: 'You are content to go back and forward on the same route, like this boat; but as for me, I hope yet to go deep into the ocean of truth.' Irving possessed little of that caution which characterises most theologians, and his bold speculations could not fail to bring him into conflict with those clerical brethren who found in the husks of their creeds sufficient nourishment for their souls. Accused of holding heretical views regarding Christ's human nature, he was in 1832 declared 'unfit' to remain a minister, and next year his license to preach was withdrawn.

Worn out by labour and sorrow, Irving died in Glasgow at the close of 1834, and he was buried in the crypt of the Cathedral—a fit resting-place for one who had the heart of a mediaeval saint. On receipt of the news that he was gone, Carlyle wrote to his own mother, asking her to pay a visit of condolence to Irving's mother, now without husband and sons. 'Go,' he said, 'and see the poor old forsaken widow: it will do her good, and yourself.'¹

The few poems written by Edward Irving seem all to

¹ Froude, *First Forty Years*, vol. ii. p. 465.

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have been marked by the same fervour that characterises his prose works. Among his early productions was 'a passionate sonnet' on the 'Flower of Haddington,' which Mrs. Carlyle never had the heart to destroy. But his main achievement as a versifier was the composition of a dozen sonnets on themes suggested by the Apocalypse of Saint John. As the present writer was informed by Irving's son, Professor Martin Irving, many years ago, these sonnets and a few lines in 'Ben Ezra' are the only productions in verse that were ever published by the Annandale mystic.

THE ANNUNCIATION (Rev. i. 8-10).

(From *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, London, 1831, p. 288.)

I am the Alpha and the Omega ;
The all-informing Word, who doth reveal
The unknown God. I am creation's Seal,
End and Beginning ; where the Father saw
His purpose all complete. I gave the law
To all creation, and watch o'er its weal,
Hold up its being, and its troubles heal.
Mine is that dreadful name, *Jehovah-Jah* ;
First, Last, which Is, which Was, which is To Come ;
The Father's style, the Godhead's proper name.
Almighty, I the Godhead's Fulness sum
Within myself. All power in heav'n I claim ;
Wide o'er the earth I rule the busy hum
Of men ; and restless powers of darkness tame.

Henry Duncan, 'the one cultivated man,' whom Carlyle, when at Annan Academy as a teacher 'could feel himself permitted to call friend,'¹ was born in 1774, at the manse of Lochrutton, of which parish his father was minister. His mother, Ann Macmurdo, was the daughter of William Macmurdo, Dumfries, and Mary Blacklock, the blind poet's sister—being therefore a niece of Dr. Blacklock and a cousin of another of Burns's friends, John

¹ Letter from Carlyle to Dr. Duncan's grandson, Geo. A. Duncan, 9th June, 1870. (Froude, *First Forty Years*, vol. ii. p. 22.)

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Macmurdo, the father of 'Bonie Jean' and 'Phillis the Fair.'¹

Duncan received his education at Dumfries Academy, and at St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh Universities. In 1799 he was presented with the living of Ruthwell, and in 1804 he married Agnes Craig, the daughter of his predecessor. Miss Craig was a grand-niece of Thomson the poet, and it was to her that the dying Burns addressed these words: 'Don't hide the sun: he will not shine long for me.' Duncan soon gave a remarkable proof of his interest in the temporal welfare of his parishioners. Consecutive bad harvests had raised the price of food so much that famine prevailed; and in order to relieve the distress in his parish he brought a cargo of Indian corn from Liverpool at his own risk and retailed it by means of an agent at prime cost. With the object of permanently improving the physical condition of his people, Duncan afterwards established two friendly societies and a parish bank. The Savings Bank which he founded at Ruthwell in 1810 admirably served the purpose for which it was instituted, and has been the model of all subsequent institutions of the kind. When in 1823 the University of St. Andrews conferred on him the degree of D.D. satisfaction was universally expressed that so useful a clergyman had been selected for honour.

In the midst of his philanthropic labours Duncan found time for antiquarian pursuits and general literary work. By rescuing from oblivion the Runic Cross of Ruthwell, which lay in detached fragments in the churchyard of his own parish, he did a real service to antiquarian science. Elaborate descriptions of the cross by Dr. Duncan are preserved in the *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* for 1832, and in the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*. Among his more popular prose writings are *The Cottage Fireside*, 1808; *The Young South Country Weaver; or, a Journey to Glasgow*, a *Tale for the Radicals*, 1821;

¹ Letters from Dr. Duncan's grandson, Mr. Henry Duncan, and MS. History of the Duncan Family lent by him.

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William Douglas; or, *the Scottish Exiles, a Historical Novel*, 3 vols., 1826; and *The Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons*, 4 vols., 1836-7. His only book of verse, *Rhymes to assist the Memory of Children*, was published anonymously in 1827. *The Dumfries and Galloway Courier*, at the office of which the booklet was printed, had been conducted by Henry Duncan during the first seven years of its existence; and by inserting in its columns a few solutions of knotty mathematical problems, by his young friend Thomas Carlyle, teacher at Annan, he had introduced to public notice the earliest work of one for whom a high destiny was in store.

Mrs. Duncan died in 1832, and four years later Dr. Duncan married Mrs. Lundie, widow of the Rev. R. Lundie, minister of Kelso. In the great Church controversy which agitated Scotland in the thirties and early forties, he sided with his friend Dr. Chalmers. At the beginning of 1843 he promoted in his own district a journal which should advocate Non-Intrusionist views; and in March the first number of *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard* appeared. True to his convictions, Duncan joined the Free Church at the Disruption, leaving a manse and grounds which had been beautified by his taste and skill. On 12th February, 1846, he died at Ruthwell after a short illness.

The best of Dr. Duncan's poetical productions is a 'Curling Song'—one of the freshest and most vigorous poems ever inspired by the great winter sport of Caledonia. It has a place in Richard Brown's *Memorabilia Curliana Mabenensia* (1830), and the copy here given was taken from that work.

CURLING SONG.

The music o' the year is hush'd
In bonny glen and shaw, man;
And winter spreads o'er nature dead
A winding-sheet o' snaw, man.
O'er burn and loch, the warlock frost
A crystal brig has laid, man;

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The wild geese, screaming wi' surprise,
The ice-bound wave hae fled, man.

Up, curler! frae your bed sae warm,
And leave your coaxing wife, man ;
Gae get your besom, tramps,¹ and stane,²
And join the friendly strife, man.
For on the water's face are met,
Wi' mony a merry joke, man,
The tenant and his jolly laird,
The pastor and his flock, man.

The rink is swept, the tees are mark'd,
The bonspiel³ is begun, man ;
The ice is true, the stanes are keen,
Huzza for glorious fun, man !
The skips are standing at the tee,
To guide the eager game, man ;
Hush! not a word, but mark the broom,
And tak' a steady aim, man.

Here draw a shot, there lay a guard,
And here beside him lie, man ;
Now let him feel a gamester's hand,
Now in this bosom die, man ;
There fill the port, and block the ice ;
We sit upon the tee, man !
Now tak' this in-ring sharp and neat,
And mak' their winner flee, man.

How stands the game? It's eight and eight,
Now for the winning shot, man !
Draw slow and sure, and tak' your aim,
I'll sweep you to the spot, man !

¹ tramps—shoes or soles with short iron spikes, to enable the wearer to walk on the ice. As the spikes injured the ice the use of tramps is now forbidden, and rubber soles have taken their place.

² stane—not *stones*, as sometimes printed. When the song was written each curler played but one stone.

³ bonspiel—a set curling match.

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The stane is thrown, it glides alang,
The besoms ply it in, man ;
Wi' twisting back the player stands,
And eager breathless grin, man.

A moment's silence, still as death,
Pervades the anxious thrang, man ;
Then sudden bursts the victor's shout,
With hollas loud and lang, man.
Triumphant besoms wave in air,
And friendly banter fly, man ;
Whilst, cold and hungry, to the inn,
Wi' eager steps they hie, man.

Now fill ae bumper—fill but ane—
And drink wi' social glee, man,
May curlers on life's slippery rink,
Frae cruel rubs be free, man ;
Or should a treacherous bias lead
Their erring course ajee, man,
Some friendly in-ring may they meet,
To guide them to the tee, man.

Dr. Henry Duncan's elder son, the Rev. George John Craig Duncan, who as a boy was well known to Carlyle, also wrote verses. 'The Outed Pastor and his Wife,' a piece composed by him in May, 1843, when he resigned the living of Kirkpatrick-Durham 'for conscience' sake, is interesting as a genuine Disruption lyric :

FROM 'THE OUTED PASTOR AND HIS WIFE.'

Rise quickly, Dearest, 'tis the Master calls us—
Forth let us go ;
We'll follow at His voice, whate'er befall us,
To weal or woe.

Yes ! let us rise, we may not linger longer—
No safety here ;
Each hour's delay makes our temptation stronger,
Our home more dear.

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These bright flowers glancing in our verdant meadows,
Where oft we've strayed—
These drooping limes that cast their sombre shadows
Across the glade—

These groves and gardens which we loved to cherish—
This sheltered spot,
Where trailing ivy hides the arching trellis
And shades our grot :

I love them, Dearest.—When I first did wed thee
This was the home
To which, with buoyant step, I joyful led thee,
Ne'er hence to roam.

Ne'er hence to roam ! as then I fondly fancied—
Our Shepherd Lord
Amid this flock, with every good enhanced,
Had spread my board ;

But now He bids us leave our pleasant dwelling—
We dare not stay ;
And, though with tearful eye and bosom swelling,
We'll haste away.¹

The lady addressed in these lines was a daughter of Samuel Clark, writer, Dumfries. After leaving Kirkpatrick-Durham, Duncan became a minister of the English Presbyterian Church. For some years he was Lecturer on Pastoral Theology and Homiletics in the Presbyterian Theological College, London. Like his father—whose biography he wrote—Duncan received the degree of D.D. from the University of St. Andrews. He died at Dumfries in 1868, aged sixty-two.

In 1821 Carlyle wrote to his brother John, by whom his old post at Annan Academy was then occupied, saying, 'Tell David Fergusson that I am charmed with

¹From MS. of the poem lent to the present writer by the Rev. G. J. C. Duncan's son, Mr. Henry Duncan, who is himself a poet, and has published a volume of excellent religious verse, entitled *The Songs of the New Age* (J. Spiers, Bloomsbury, 1899).

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his manuscript; it is the prettiest ever written for the *Encyclopædia*, and perfectly correct. I shall give you enough to write in harvest—at present I have nothing.’¹ David Moncrieff Ferguson, school-master at Annan, whose ability as a copyist is thus acknowledged, was born at Annan in 1796, and was educated at the Academy, where he had Carlyle as a playmate. In 1832 he published *Evan Bane; a Highland Legend: and other Poems*, and in 1847 a prose work on the Bible. His mind becoming unhinged soon after the publication of the latter volume, he was removed to the Crichton Asylum, Dumfries, in which he remained till his death on 31st January, 1875. A few touching verses from his pen are preserved in *The New Moon; or, Crichton Royal Institution Literary Register*.

Evan Bane is palpably an imitation of *The Lady of the Lake*; but it is superior to most of the ‘Highland Tales’ that were poured from the press three-quarters of a century ago. Scott himself would have found it easy to praise such lines as these:

‘Madly I ply mine armed heels;
The generous charger tries
To urge his speed—he starts—he reels—
But forward still he flies.
O’er Gillian’s rushy holm we sweep,
And through Stranavon’s valley deep,
Where rough Benvari’s mountains steep
On either hand arise:—
Close—close—the tramp is in the rear;
Shout—snort—and curse, by fits we hear;
The hoof-beats double on our ear,
And hard upon us gain:
“Hold on—hold on—my gallant horse!
Thy toughest sinews strain;
Spare not the remnant of thy force,
Or soon thy master’s stiffened corse
Must quit thy loosened rein!”
As if my voice had lent him wings,

¹ *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. i. p. 359.

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Away ! away ! the charger springs—
One painful effort more !
His saddle-girth—his failing limbs—
His sides are dropping gore ;
To right and left his bridle swings
The flaky foam—as shallop flings
The salt-spume from its prore ;
And now, as thick as rattling hail,
Stamp—stamp—and lash upon the gale,
Give sign the chase is o'er.’

While at Craigenputtock the Carlyles were on terms of intimacy with Mrs. Caroline Eliza Richardson (*née* Scott), who then resided at Dumfries, and was locally famous as the author of a volume of poetry of which seventeen hundred copies had been sold. In the *Reminiscences* this accomplished woman is immortalised as ‘poor and hospitable Mrs. Richardson, once a “novelist” of mark, much of a gentlewoman and well loved by us both.’¹

Caroline E. Scott was born at Forge House, in the parish of Canonbie, on 24th November, 1777. At an early age she went to India, where in April, 1799, she was married to her cousin, Gilbert Geddes Richardson, the captain of an Indiaman. On the death of her husband, Mrs. Richardson returned to Scotland, and settling in her native county, devoted herself for some years to the education of her five children. The first edition of her poems appeared in 1828,² and a few years later she published a novel in three volumes entitled *Adonia*. Mrs. Richardson died at Forge, her birth-place, on 9th October, 1853, and was buried in Canonbie Churchyard—not in the ancient Kirkyard of St. Mary, which in a moment of poetic rapture she had chosen as her resting-place :

‘St. Mary’s loch lies shimmering still,
But St. Mary’s Kirk-bell’s lang dune ringing ;

¹ *Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle* (Froude), vol. ii. p. 140.

² *Poems, by Mrs. G. G. Richardson, Dumfries*, Edinburgh.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

There's naething now but the grave-stane hill,
To tell o' a' their loud psalm-singing.

O lay me there, O lay me there,
Where the dead in loneliness are lying—
I want nae dirge, but the moorland air,
And rest, sweet rest, where nane are spying.¹

Among the later friends of Carlyle at Dumfries there was one poet of distinction, Thomas Aird, author of 'The Devil's Dream on Mount Aksbeck.' No direct evidence that this writer was acquainted with his great contemporary in early life has been advanced; but in 1837 the Carlyles knew him and 'loved him well,'² and latterly Carlyle never visited Dumfries without calling upon him.

Thomas Aird was born on 28th August, 1802, at Bowden, Roxburghshire, an ancient village near the 'hated heath' of Scott's marchman, and under the shadow of the Eildons—enchanted hills whose 'three crests' have stirred the fancy of many a poet from 'True Thomas' to Andrew Lang. His father, an Anti-Burgher 'portioner,' who acted as the village carpenter, sent him from Melrose Parish School to Edinburgh University to study for the Church. Young Aird, however, though he attended the theological classes at the University, was never licensed to preach. A sincere believer in the whole doctrine affirmed by the Church of Scotland, he was not prevented by conscientious scruples from entering the ministry. But, in the early decades of last century, it was difficult for any youth who had no influential friends to get a living; and a rumour that Aird, following the example of Home and Blacklock, had written a play, did not increase his chances of securing favour in the Church.

¹ 'St. Mary's Kirk-Yard—Selkirkshire,' in *Poems by Mrs. G. G. Richardson*, pp. 68-9.

² 'Go on and prosper! That is always our wish (my wife's and mine) for one whom we love well.' (Letter from Carlyle to Aird, 22nd Jan., 1837, printed in the Rev. Jardine Wallace's 'Memoir,' prefixed to 5th edition of *Aird's Poems*.)

CARLYLE AND HIS CIRCLE

Resolved to make literary composition and not preaching the work of his life, he began to write articles for magazines, and to prepare for the press a collection of poems. In 1826 he published *Murtzouffe; a Tragedy in Three Acts: with other Poems*, a work which proved a failure, though it contained his touching elegiac piece, 'My Mother's Grave.' His second book, an interesting prose composition entitled *Religious Characteristics*, appeared in 1827. That same year 'The Devil's Dream on Mount Aksbeck,' his most famous poem, was published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In Aird's conception of the Devil as a spirit still bearing traces of his original glory, the powerful influence of Milton may be detected; but from his very nature he was incapable of picturing a loathsome fiend. The touches of modern sentiment in the following lines from the poem must have appeared strange to many of his early readers:

'At last, from out the barren womb of many thousand years,
A sound as of the green-leav'd earth his thirsty spirit cheers.
And O! a presence soft and cool came o'er his sultry
dream—

A form of beauty clad about with fair Creation's beam.
A low sweet voice was in his ear, thrill'd through his inmost
soul,
And these the words that bow'd his heart with softly sad
control:—

"No sister e'er hath been to thee with pearly eyes of love,
No mother e'er hath wept for thee, an outcast from above;
No hand hath come from out the cloud to wash thy scarrèd
face;
No voice to bid thee lie in peace, the noblest of thy race.
But bow thy heart to God of Love, and all shall yet be
well,
And yet in days of holy peace and love thy soul shall dwell.

And thou shalt dwell midst leaves and rills far from this
torrid heat,
And I with streams of cooling milk shall bathe thy blister'd
feet.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

And when the troubled tears shall start to think of all the
past,
My mouth shall haste to kiss them off, and chase thy sorrows
fast ;
And thou shalt walk in soft white light with kings and
priests abroad,
And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the hills of God.”¹

In 1835 the editorship of *The Dumfriesshire and Galloway Herald*, a weekly Conservative paper, was entrusted to Aird. To quote his own words, the new Dumfries editor was ‘no cheek-surrendering Quaker’; and in the political and ecclesiastical disputes of the time he bore himself manfully. It was not as a party organ, however, that the *Herald* became famous among Scottish journals. Aird gave it a fine literary tone, and its reviews of books, and miscellaneous articles, were as loudly praised by keen Liberals and ‘Voluntaries’ as by staunch Tories and Churchmen. His charming prose work, *The Old Bachelor in the Old Scottish Village*, and several of his poems, including ‘May Morning,’ the buoyant lyric that follows, appeared originally in the *Herald* :

May morn, how fresh and fair,
With dews and honey smells,
And sunny crystal air !
The little birds are at their carollings ;
The booming wild bee spins his airy rings :
Come forth and see. High hanging woods, the gleams
Of opening valleys with their branching streams,
White cities shining on the bending shore,
Away far fused the ocean’s silver floor,
For thee shall glorify the hour,
Young Queen of Beauty, from thy virgin bower.²

Othuriel, and other Poems, the first book issued by Aird after Dumfries became his home, appeared in 1839. It was coldly received; but a full edition of his poetical

¹ *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. xxii. p. 443.

² Rescued from the columns of the *Herald* by the Rev. Jardine Wallace, who published it in his edition of *Aird’s Poems* (1878).

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works published by Blackwood in 1848 excited much favourable notice, and thoroughly established his reputation. No commendation of the book was more grateful to the author than that of Carlyle, who wrote: 'I find in it everywhere a healthy breath as of mountain breezes; a native manliness, veracity, and geniality.'

In 1863, Aird, conscious of decaying physical strength, gave up the editorship of the *Herald*, but he did not leave Dumfries. His house was a red-stone building at Castlebank, the windows of which looked over the Nith to Troqueer Churchyard, with its crowded memorial stones. Near to the house was the Cauld, or weir across the river, which, as Carlyle had written, 'whispered of rusticities and actualities; singing a kind of lullaby to all follies and evil and fantastic thoughts.'¹ Frugal and contented, Aird knew the joys of the 'simple life.' In his walks by the river side he was often accompanied by intelligent boys of his acquaintance, and to them he would discourse in Wordsworthian style on the treasures to be found in every wood and field. Mr. J. H. Balfour Browne, K.C., who in boyhood had not a few rambles with the poet, writes: 'He was, of all men I have known, the one most hand-and-glove with Nature, not in the inquisitive sense in which Darwin was, but in real friendliness.'² Aird was particularly fond of birds, and, like Saint Francis, he seemed to have a strange influence over them. His biographer, the Rev. Jardine Wallace of Traquair, has a delightful picture of the old man and his feathered friends: 'Robin fed from his hand, and his pet chaffinch "Tibbie" took crumbs of bread from his mouth. When asked for the secret of his taming power over birds, he replied, "A pure conscience and a steady eye are the only lures; they will know at once if you mean to harm, and disguises are useless."³

¹ Letter to Aird, dated 15th November, 1848.

² Letter read at a meeting in celebration of the Aird Centenary held at Dumfries on 28th November, 1902.

³ 'Memoir' prefixed to the 5th edition of *Aird's Poems*, p. lxxviii.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

The end came in the spring of 1876. As it approached, Aird spoke much of Bowden and Melrose, and seemed like the dying Scott to hear the rippling of 'ever-dear Tweed.' But it was not his wish to lie with his kin in the green churchyard of Bowden. 'Bury me,' he said, 'in old St. Michael's, hallowed by the dust of Burns'; and there his remains were deposited, not far from the grave of the Master Singer.

No writer would now praise Thomas Aird so extravagantly as did some influential critics on the appearance of the first complete edition of his poems. But the reviewers of his time showed discernment in selecting his productions for special notice, for he had a firm hold on Nature and considerable strength of imagination. Such poems as 'Frank Sylvan,' 'A Summer Day,' and 'A Winter Day' charm by their effective presentation of familiar objects in the country. In his numerous references to the trees of the forest, he is as accurate as Tennyson himself. Here are a few lines descriptive of the sycamore in autumn :

'The plane-tree, first
With soft crimped leaf to burst the honey-glue
Of Spring's brown swelling bud—as well the boy
Knows, bent on whistles, when the sap is up,
And the moist bark comes peeling cleanly off—
Is first to shed her leaves; down drop they now,
Dullest of sere, embossed with spots of black.'¹

Aird's chief gift, however, was imaginative power of a weird kind. This is displayed not only in that early poem which gained for him celebrity, but also in 'The Prophecy,' a remarkable production of the Dumfries period of his life. Doubtless the reputation of Thomas Aird would be materially enhanced if the sternly realistic poem now reproduced, by kind permission of his representatives and Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons, were more widely known :

¹ 'Frank Sylvan : Fitte the Third' (*Works*, ed. 1878, p. 30).

CARLYLE AND HIS CIRCLE

THE PROPHECY.

(From *The Poetical Works of Thomas Aird* (ed. 1878), pp. 299-302.)

I.

Winds roar : the ragged clouds are torn :
Glimmers the gibbous moon forlorn :
Creak ! creak ! the irons groan :
Look not up, hurry on !
Dare you look ? The Woman see,
Low sitting by the baleful Tree—
Tree, with its fruit of death abhorred,
Not of the Gardens of the Lord !

II.

One short year of wedded gladness,
And Grizzel sits in widowed sadness ;
Lonely, and poor, and thoughtful she,
Nursing her boy upon her knee.
Late in the night, slow, without din,
A stranger Hunchback Dwarf came in,
Bareheaded, bearded, evil-faced,
A leathern girdle round his waist,
A tall staff in his bony hand,
Nodding as from some weary land.
On startled Grizzel's arm he laid
His grasp ; imperfect sounds he made,
And signs whereby he signified
That there all night he would abide.
It could not be : In every feature
How swelled the dumb malignant creature,
To be refused ! With sudden check,
Calm pointing to her infant's neck,
As sleeping in her lap it lay,
He shook his head and passed away.
Next morn, in chalk upon her door,
The Gallows-Tree her baby bore,
With words to make the meaning clear
Of that prophetic picture drear.
Poor Grizzel saw it, shrunk, and pressed
Her infant to her boding breast.

III.

Hopeless waiting, listless wo,
Did mortal man the Future know !

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

What wouldn't that Mother give to be
Purged of the clinging Prophecy!
It works by night, it works by day,
To take her peace of mind away.
How o'er her boy she bends to trace
The changes of his sleeping face!
If motions from within torment
The features, how her soul is rent;
The infant passions these may be,
Pledge of that rising Gallows-Tree!
But dimpling, smiling, now he lightens;
Oh how her hopeful spirit brightens!
Down, down upon his neck she presses,
With many a tear, her vehement kisses.

IV.

In restless hope, in watchful fear,
By urgent love, by awe severe,
From threatened ill her son to save,
No genial freedom Grizzel gave.
A guardianship so jealous bent,
He felt to be a punishment:
Recoiling from the irksome sway,
He learned to scorn and disobey:
And thus from out the froward child
Upprew the youth with passions wild.
Oh that gloomy moorland wood!
Oh that midnight deed of blood!
He killed and buried there a maid
Whom he had first to shame betrayed.
Vengeance sped. His bones of guilt,
Near where the innocent blood he spilt,
Swinging in chains rot on their pole:
Christ have mercy on his soul!
Thus worked that Prophecy of ill
Itself in sin and sorrow to fulfil.

V.

Childless Grizzel, backward turning,
O'er all the past her spirit yearning,
O'er what she did, what left undone,
To check, to guide, to save her son;
In process still to calculate
How to have stayed his evil fate,

CARLYLE AND HIS CIRCLE

(Oh weary process, night and day !)
Her wildered brain at last gives way.
The houseless moor, there now is she,
A dweller with her son to be.
Lean snuffing dogs she scares away,
And from his eyes the birds of prey.
With flowerets from the summer lea
She garlands all his ghastly Tree.
And aye she brings a ladder there,
And climbs the Tree, and combs his hair.
She sits below: full on her go
Cutting scuds and whirls of snow;
Morsels of ice, spit from the sky,
In her gray locks unmelted lie;
Swung in the elemental battles,
The Skeleton above her rattles;
Yet there the Word of God she'll read,
So may her son still hear and heed !
And morn and eve, in storm or calm,
She sings for him a holy psalm.

VI.

In her eyes a ghostly shimmer,
By the wan moon's uncertain glimmer,
With her last dregs of light forlorn
Still sicklier in the gray of morn,
From out the storms of midnight see
The Woman of the rueful Tree!
To the Tree she bows her head,
Now she's dying—now she's dead.
But lo! her hand is on The Book,
And saintly is dead Grizzel's look.

X

LATTER-DAY POETS

ABOUT a year after the death of Aird there was first published *The Courtship and Wedding o' Jock o' the Knowe*,¹ a racy and original work, relating the story of a 'gaberlunzie,' or beggar, who successfully wooed the daughter of a laird, and on his marriage-day gave a feast to his old companions.

Robert William Thom, author of the poem, was born on 30th December, 1816, at 30 Ednam Street, Annan. Not caring to assist his father, who was a doctor, by compounding medicines, he went to Blackburn in 1834, and entered the employment of a draper. A few years later Thom returned to his native district, and married Jane Cuthbertson, sister of William Cuthbertson, founder of *The Annandale Observer*. Afterwards he resided successively in Blackburn, Liverpool, Birkenhead (where for two years, 1858-60, he published a paper called *Thom's Advertiser*), Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, and Glasgow. He died at 29 Govanhill Street, Govanhill, Glasgow, on 2nd February, 1890, and was buried in Cathcart Cemetery. His reputation has been made the peculiar care of Mr. Joseph Jardine, Annan, who in 1908 contributed to *The Annandale Observer* a series of articles on his life and writings.²

Thom's published poetical works are: *Herbert and Rosana* (Dumfries, 1839); *The Emigrant, and other Poems*

¹ W. Porteous & Co., and W. Love, Glasgow, 1877.

² These articles will probably appear in book form at no distant date.

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(Blackburn, 1841); *The Border Bard* (Annan, 1844); *The Epochs*, 2 vols. (Carlisle, 1846); *Poems* (Birkenhead, 1853); *Cleon: a Drama* (London, 1855); *Crow and Crouch: a Drama* (1860); *The Courtship and Wedding o' Jock o' the Knowe* (Glasgow, 1877); *Poems by Robert W. Thom* (Glasgow, 1880); *Poems and Ballads* (Glasgow, 1886); and *Poems (Scotch and English)*, and *The Fall of Kirkconnel* (Glasgow, 1887). An enlarged edition of *The Epochs*, a poem in which Thom grapples with the same theme that taxed the powers of Robert Pollok, was published at Annan in 1847-8, in three volumes, and another edition of the same work was issued in Glasgow in 1884. *Cleon* and *Crow and Crouch* were reprinted (the latter under the title of *The Trevanions*) in *Poems by Robert W. Thom*. The more popular *Jock o' the Knowe* passed through no fewer than four editions, the last of which appeared in 1883.

In addition to these books, Thom published two prose works, *Wyseby: a Legend of the First Irvings* (Edinburgh, 1844), and *The Dominie's Charge* (Edinburgh, 1846). *A History of the Borders*, on which he was engaged in 1844, does not appear to have been printed.

The following lines, descriptive of Jock o' the Knowe's wedding-guests, will afford a good example of Thom's work in the vernacular :

Bricht raise the sun frae the siller sea
That fringes auld Scotland bonnilie,
Poorin' prodigal bounties doon
On loch, an' hill, an' tower, an' toon,
On lanely cots 'mid muirlands sittin',
On ancient ha's 'mid green woods hid ;
An' syne through window panes it slid,
Intil the een o' auld wives knittin',
An' played a thousand gambols, flittin'
Ower bonnie lasses blithely spinnin' ;
Then far an' braid ower brae an' glen,
It poured its rowth o' beams on men
Their bread in seugh¹ an' furrow winnin' ;

¹ ditch.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

Syne laughed through their white hawthorn shield
On wee herd laddies far a-field.
But ere the sun had climbed sae high
That the wee dew-drap thought o' fittin',
Ilk lass had left her spinnin'-wheel,
Ilk auld wife thrawn aside her knittin',
Ilk weeder had forehowed the furrow,
Ilk ditcher frae his darg had hurried,
An' ilk wee herd had left his kye
Tae dauner e'en where they thought fittin'.
They stood by door, by yett, an' by stile,
Wonderin' an' fearin', perplexed an' flurried,
Agape an' agaze an' bewildered, while
Aneath the bonnie blue mornin' sky,
Wi' open flout an' sidelang leer,
Or merry laugh an' lightsome jeer,
Or a lang-drawn grane, an' a bitter gibe,
On their way tae the Ha' gaed troopin' by
The ragged gaberlunzie tribe—
Sailors wha never had seen the sea,
Sodgers wha never had dreamt o' war,
Blin' bodies unco gleg o' the ee,
Kilted pipers wha ne'er saw Braemar,
Braw musicians, withouten a tune,
Wha blew on the pipes, or couthily fiddled;
Lang prophetesses, lank an' broon,
Wham their goddess, Fortune, sair had diddled;
Mony an ancient auld-farrant carlin',
Wi' furrowed broo an' sun-burnt gizen;
An' sturdy hissies, onward harlin'
Their duddy weans by the dizen.¹

Thom's poems in standard English contain many isolated beauties of thought and expression. Witness these lines :

His eyes were sad as stars
Seen from the chamber of a dying man.

The Epochs, 2nd edition, Book VIII.

The peace of naked skies lay on his lofty face.

Ibid.

¹ From *The Courtship and Wedding o' Jock o' the Knowe*, pp. 34-5.

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The golden-winged and dapple-breasted Dawn.

Cleon, Scene IV.

Discerning angels throned in every star,
Yet all unconscious that around his feet
Devils were planting thorns!

The Trevanions, Scene XX.

Sunshine and shadow, and low skirring rain,
And the loud shouting of the passionate floods.

'Sonnet' (in *Poems by Robert W. Thom*, p. 87).

Mrs. Jane Messenger or Cuthbertson, the wife of Thom's brother-in-law, William Cuthbertson,¹ was for many years a contributor of verses to her husband's paper, and also to the Dumfries journals. She was the daughter of a landed proprietor in Cumberland, named John Messenger, and was twice married—first to Mr. T. H. Oliver, solicitor, Wigton, and afterwards to Mr. Cuthbertson. She died at Annan on 10th March, 1873, aged sixty-seven. Mrs. Cuthbertson's pieces were much admired by the readers of the newspapers in which they appeared. They show a true love of nature, and there is a pleasing allusiveness in the language of many of them. Here is a characteristic verse from one of her numerous poems on 'Flowers':

'The yellow broom still waves by greenwood glade,
Bright as when England's Alfred sought its shade;
And, nestling near it, nods the dear blue bell,
The fabled flower I sought by pathless dell,
In youthful days.'

Francis Bennoch—a poet of wider reputation—was the son of a farmer on the Drumlanrig estate of the Duke of Buccleuch, and was born at Drumcruil, in the parish of Durisdeer, on 25th June, 1812. Beginning business in London as a silk merchant in 1837, he ultimately attained to a position of great prosperity. He died, while on a visit to Germany, on 29th June, 1890.

¹ William Cuthbertson was born at Carlisle in 1807. He commenced business at Annan as a bookseller and publisher in 1832, and died in 1877.

THE POETS OF DUMFRIESSHIRE

Bennoch published three volumes—*The Storm, and other Poems* (1849), *Sir Ralph de Rayne* (1872), and *Poems, Lyrics, Songs and Sonnets* (1877). Perhaps his most pleasing poem is 'May-Day', a lyric preserved in his last collection. There are a few Wordsworthian touches in the piece :

'Come, ere the lark has left his nest,
Or lambkin bleated on the hill ;
Come, see how nature looks in rest,
And learn the bliss of being still.'

Bennoch's friend, William M'Dowall, though best known as a writer of prose, is also remembered as a versifier, having published a long poem entitled *The Man of the Woods*,¹ and a few ballads and songs. He was born at Maxwelltown in 1815, and was educated principally at Dumfries Academy. While serving his apprenticeship to a bookbinder, he contributed many articles to the Dumfries papers, thus establishing a local reputation as a writer. M'Dowall became a professional journalist in 1843, when he went to Edinburgh to assist in the management of *The Scottish Herald*. After an absence of three years, he returned to Dumfries to occupy the editorial chair of *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard*. Except for a brief interval, during which he conducted a journal in Sunderland, he continued to edit the *Standard* till his death on 28th October, 1888.

Mr. M'Dowall's largest and best book is the *History of the Burgh of Dumfries*, published in 1867, and reprinted in 1873 and 1906. His *Memorials of St. Michael's, the Old Parish Churchyard of Dumfries* (1876), and *Chronicles of Lincluden, as an Abbey and as a College* (1886), also contain much valuable information, the fruit of painstaking research. Three less important books—*Burns in Dumfriesshire, Among the Old Scotch Minstrels*, and *The Mind in the Face*—complete the list of his prose works.

¹ First published in 1844. A second and greatly enlarged edition appeared in 1882.

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Holding with Emerson that 'there is an occult relation between man and the vegetable,' M'Dowall tried in *The Man of the Woods* to work out that idea. His conception could not fail to lead to artificiality; and long before the end of the poem, the average reader becomes tired of trees that are essentially human, and is ready to declare his preference for the treatment of natural objects that was in vogue in classic times, when rocks and trees were made to speak as such. The value of the poem lies in its happy descriptions of famous trees in the neighbourhood of Dumfries—the Ash in Troqueer Churchyard, the Dock Limes, and other trees that have interesting associations. An added pathos is given to the lines in which M'Dowall apostrophises the Ash at Troqueer by the fact that he lies at rest but a few yards from the spot where the 'hoary' tree stood prior to 1890, when the axe was laid to its root.

THE ASH TREE IN TROQUEER CHURCHYARD.

(From *The Man of the Woods*, pp. 6 and 7.)

Hail, hoary Ash! whose hallowed shade
O'er-canopies the slumbering dead,
And casts congenial gloom around
The precincts of this holy ground!
Now age amongst thy leaves has crept,
And from thy form its freshness stript;
Time on thy trunk his hand has laid,
And, pointing to the tombs, has said—
'Ere long to death thy head must bow,
And thou shalt be as these below;
Thy youth—thy prime—thy autumn past,—
Be levelled with the earth at last.'
But though life's close be thus revealed,
Strength still remains its germ to shield—
Strength to sustain the tempest's shock,
And long its fiercest fury mock,
'To keep thee pillared on the plain,
Life's emblem in the grave's domain,
Whilst marking, 'neath thy foliage shrined,
The sons of men to dust consigned.

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David Dunbar, another cultured Dumfries writer, was a son of George Dunbar, auctioneer, and a nephew of the Rev. Dr. Dunbar, editor of *The Nithsdale Minstrel*. Born at Dumfries on 3rd April, 1828, he received his education at the Academy, and was afterwards writing master in that institution. He died on 23rd June, 1873, but a few months after the publication of his *Poems of Home Life*. The song which follows was regarded by Mr. Dunbar himself as one of his best efforts :

TINWALD GREEN HILLS.

(From *Poems of Home Life*, pp. 247-8.)

O dear to my heart are the Tinwald green hills,
Whose beauty my soul wi' sweet ecstasy thrills,
As my een, wi' saut tears, busy memory fills—
 O the green hills o' auld Tinwald,
 And O, the auld Tinwald green hills !

I hae herded the kye, I hae tented the claes,
I hae gathered the brammels, the haws, and the slaes,
And roved wi' companions out-ower their green braes—
 O the green hills o' auld Tinwald,
 O the auld Tinwald green hills !

I hae courted in monie a flower-covered field,
And kissed my sweet lassie in monie a bield,
And hand locked in hand, we together hae speeled
 The bonnie green hills o' auld Tinwald—
 O the auld Tinwald green hills !

The bairns o' my comrades now ramble wi' mine,
Where their fathers would often ilk ither entwine,
Arms garlanding necks, in the days o' lang syne—
 O the green hills o' auld Tinwald,
 O the auld Tinwald green hills !

And now in auld age, though the hills be ower steep,
And the heuchs only fitted for youth's nimble leap,
I love the dear hills 'neath whose shadows I'll sleep—
 O the dear hills o' auld Tinwald,
 O the auld Tinwald green hills !

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A year after Dunbar's death there passed away Dr. Gibson, author of 'A Lockerbye Lycke,' a ballad which has some of the old Border fire. Alexander Craig Gibson was born at Harrington on 17th March, 1813. He spent most of his boyhood at Halldykes, in the parish of Dryfesdale, and received his early education at Lockerbie. After completing his studies at Edinburgh University, Gibson commenced the practice of medicine at Branthwaite, whence he removed, two years later, to Coniston and Hawkshead. In 1857 he settled at Bebington, Cheshire, where he died on 12th June, 1874.

A LOCKERBYE LYCKE.

(Taken from Dr. Gibson's *The Folk-Speech of Cumberland and some Districts Adjacent*, 1869, by permission of Messrs. G. & T. Coward, Carlisle.)

A large company meets in the Black Bull Inn at Lockerbie on the night of a hunting tryst.

An' there war Johnstones an' Jardines routh
Amang the rattlan' crewe,
Wi' Herbert Herryes o' fayre Ha' Dykes,
An' his buirdlye byllye Hughe;

An' gallaunte Wullye o' Becks was there,
Wi' Wullye o' Kyrtoone:
Sae they byrl't awaye at the reid, reid wyne,
As the toasts gaed roun' an' roun'.

Whyle up an' spak wylde Wullye o' Becks,
An' theyre fusionless toasts he curst,
'We'll toom a glasse tylle ilk man's lasse,
An' Ha' Dykes maun name his first!'

Than up gatte the Laird o' bonnie Ha' Dykes—
'Weel! rayther nor marre fayre myrthe,
Here's wynsome Jean o' the Wyllye Hole,
The flower o' Tundergayrthe;

'An' he quha wanna drynke fayre to thatte
Maun quytte thysse companye;
An' he quha lychtlyes thatte sweet lasse,
Maun answer it weel tylle me.'

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- Then up spak' Wullye o' Kyrtletoone,
 (A sleekye deevil I trowe),
 'Folke say, up the Water o' Mylke, that she lykies
 Ye're byllye farre better nor yowe!'
- The reid marke brunt on the Herryes his bree,
 An' wow but he lookyt grymme:
 'Can ye thynke that the flower o' the Mylke suld bloom
 For a beggarlye loon lyke hymme?'
- 'Can ye thynke that ane haughtye dame lyke her
 Coulede looke wi' a kyndlye e'e
 On ane quaha for everye placke that he spens,
 Or wastes, maun sorn on me?'
- 'An' div ye thynke,' cryet the wrathfu' Hughe,
 'It's noo my turne to speer—
 That ever a leal hearty lassie could lo'e
 A sumph for the sake o' his gear?'
- 'An' div ye thynke'—mayre scornfu' wordes
 Younge Hughe essayet to speake,
 But his brither's rychte han' rase high in wrathe,
 An' fell on his lowan' cheeke.

Maddened by the insult, Hugh Herries tears his glove with his teeth—an earnest of deadly feud—and that same night he kills his brother at Hurkell Burn. The spot where the murder took place is still haunted:

A voice ilke year as that nychte comes roun',
 Yells a' the plantyns throo'—
 'There never was Herryes that dreet a strayke,
 But he garri't the smyter rue.'

In 1879 James Hastie Stoddart, LL.D., Glasgow—a native of Sanquhar—published *The Village Life*,¹ a work which contains poetical sketches of the schoolmaster, the blacksmith, the minister, the beadle, and all the other prominent characters of a typical Scottish village—one of the few places on earth where life still has what Matthew Arnold calls 'depth and savour.'

Stoddart settled in Glasgow in 1850, when he was

¹James MacLehose, Glasgow.

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about eighteen years of age. In 1862 he joined the staff of *The Glasgow Herald* as sub-editor, and in 1875 he succeeded Professor Jack as editor. Five years after the publication of *The Village Life*, Dr. Stoddart issued *The Seven Sagas of Prehistoric Man*. On 11th April, 1888,

‘He left us—dreaming still that he might live
To shape some epic song with ripened powers ;
The larger life he hath attained may give
His dream a larger utterance than ours !’¹

Perhaps the most interesting of Stoddart’s villagers is the parish clerk. The sympathetic reference in the following lines to that worthy’s delight in the ghost and fairy lore of his own district must have been appreciated by many of Dr. Stoddart’s readers :

‘All fairy tales were loved and true,
All ghostly stories, old and new,
Were as the facts of life to him ;
And not a mossy wall, a cliff,
A linn, a pool, a Druid stone,
A knotted oak, with heart all gone,
A fairy ring, frilled round with fern,
But had its legend, gay or stern.
He knew them all—aye, even felt
That still old influences dwelt
Around them. He could plainly hear
The light feet of the fairies near,
And saw the wraith that legend told
Glared from the big bole of the oak,
Or squatted sad and white and cold
On the grey boulder, that, wise folk
Maintained, stood over stores of gold.’

Nothing in *The Village Life* has been more generally admired than this picture of the blacksmith’s daughter wandering alone in the moonlight :

‘Nought loves she better than to see
The red light softly die away

¹ From ‘In Memoriam, J. H. S.’ (*The Glasgow Herald*, 14th April, 1888).

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Beyond the woods, beyond the moor.
Then steals she past the smithy door,
Rejoicing in her friend, the Night,
Her heart, her eyes, all brimming o'er
With youthful feelings of delight.
She seeks new life below the moon,
And happy thoughts then crave the boon
Of speech from her red lips, while high
Above, the stars are glowing bright
In the blue lift, that to her eye
Seems veiling Heaven from mortal sight.'

Dr. Stoddart's death was soon followed by that of the Rev. James M'Farlan, Ruthwell, a poet whose few pieces were written only for his friends. M'Farlan was a grandson of the Edinburgh advocate mentioned by Lord Cockburn as 'John M'Farlan, an apostle, and worthy of the best apostolic age.' Born, on 6th January, 1845, in the manse occupied by his father as minister of Muiravonside, Stirlingshire, he was educated in Edinburgh—proceeding from the Academy to the University in 1861, and entering the Divinity Hall in 1864. Having been authorised by the Presbytery of Linlithgow to preach, he went early in 1869 to Dundee as assistant to the Rev. Dr. Watson. In 1871 he became minister of Ruthwell, and married Helen, daughter of the late Professor Allan Menzies, Edinburgh. Chiefly through his exertions, the Runic Cross in the garden of Ruthwell Manse was secured to the locality, and scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Act in 1887. The delicate carving of the Cross had suffered greatly from exposure to the weather, and the Antiquaries of Edinburgh had offered to transfer the column to their museum for preservation. Unwilling to send away the Cross from the district of which it had for long centuries been the glory, the minister of Ruthwell enlarged his church by building an apse, and removed the precious relic from the manse gate to the newly-formed recess, where it has now stood for more than twenty years.

During a brief visit to Ruthwell Manse in August,

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1889, the present writer, glancing at the words, *Hodie mihi, cras tibi* (To-day for myself, to-morrow for you), which were carved over the west window, remarked: 'That motto might be exhibited in every house.' 'Yes,' replied Mr. M'Farlan, 'but it is especially appropriate in the case of a manse—as I often feel.' A few weeks later he died of pleurisy in a friend's house at Foulden, near Berwick. In an interesting sketch of his life by Mrs. M'Farlan, included in a memorial volume entitled *James M'Farlan*, we read: 'As the shadows of the valley deepened, his wife repeated to him lines from Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra," which he had long cherished in his heart:

"All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,"

and in a strong voice he responded:

"This I *am* worth to God."¹

A scholarly pamphlet entitled *The Ruthwell Cross*, published in the autumn of 1885, remains to attest Mr. M'Farlan's skill as a writer of prose. His poems have not appeared in any book intended for general circulation, but twenty-three of them are given in the privately printed memorial volume referred to in last paragraph. They show how keen was his eye for the beauty of flower and leaf, and how deep his sense of mysteries which Nature cannot solve.

To A. M.

At Ruthwell: Easter Day, MDCCCLXXXVI.

(From *James M'Farlan*, p. 120. This sonnet commemorates Alexander Menzies, M.B., C.M.—son of the late Sir William John Menzies, agent for the Church of Scotland—who died at sea, midway between Colombo and Aden, on 30th April, 1887, in his twenty-fifth year.)

No, not in earth,—a purer element
Enwraps thy breast. What need of asphodels?
'The humming water' and 'the simple shells'
Our Shakespeare sang compose thy monument.

¹ *James M'Farlan*, Edinburgh, 1892, p. 106.

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Dear soul, when thou wast here the blooms of Lent,
Snow-white, warm saffron lilies, wrought their spells
Of fancy and desire; while in the dells
The primrose blushed, and we were well content.

‘The Angels’ joy’ we spake of,—man’s pure dreams
Of triumph over sin and pain through love,
And nature’s light that shed on thee their beams.
A finer light fell o’er thee from above,
Nor will it fade though morning’s amber gleams
On thy Arabian billows cease to move.

The Rev. James Milligan, D.D., Houghton-le-Spring—who shortly before his death, in 1892, published *Wimpleburn*,¹ a poem descriptive of Ecclefechan, his native village—was born on 29th August, 1829. In youth he was very delicate in health, but by persistent application to study, even in hours of great physical weakness, he qualified himself for the ministry. Milligan emigrated to Canada in 1856, and in 1861 became minister of the Free Church congregations at King and Laskey. During the intervals of his pastoral work on the edge of the primeval forest, he wrote some *Village Sketches*, which, long afterwards, were utilised in the preparation of *Wimpleburn*. Returning to this country in precarious health, he became settled, in 1869, at Houghton-le-Spring, Durham, as minister of a Presbyterian Church. In 1890 the poet, who was now ‘Doctor Milligan,’ having received the degree of D.D. from an American University of good standing, published *Aphorisms, Maxims, and Short Sentences*. *Wimpleburn*, which had been kept by him for many years and subjected to frequent revision, appeared in the winter of 1891. Milligan died suddenly of heart disease at Houghton-le-Spring on 6th January, 1892, and was buried at Ecclefechan. He was survived by his wife, a daughter of the late Thomas Slater, of Castlebank, Ecclefechan.

Though slightly unequal, *Wimpleburn* is on the whole

¹ *Wimpleburn or Village Sketches, and other Poems*, by James Milligan (Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1891).

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a very fine poem. Dr. Milligan was a true lover of the 'kind beech-rows of Entepfuhl,' and the scenery around the village where his youth was spent is well portrayed by him. To the present writer—who is perhaps no impartial judge, having enjoyed his friendship—he seems to deserve a place beside James Grahame, author of *The Sabbath* and *The British Georgics*. The same power of vivid description that charms us in the latter poem is displayed in *Wimpleburn*, with here and there a touch revealing a depth and tenderness of which we find no trace in the works of Grahame.

Near the commencement of *Wimpleburn* occur some quotable lines on the prospect from Burnswark, an isolated hill in the neighbourhood of Ecclefechan, crowned with two Roman camps :¹

'There is a hill, from whose broad windy top,
I've often viewed the varied landscape o'er—
The grass-grown camp, where Cæsar's legions lay,
Chafed by the blustering Caledonian winds,
And longed for their own sunny Italy :
The long brown highway o'er the ridgy height,
The dark plantations dotting all the land,
The fair white homesteads, and the fertile breadths
Of corn and pasture. The small clustering lakes
Renowned in story. And across the vale,
Set in the bosom of its ample woods,
The castle's hoary pile, that speaks of old
Freebooting times, and bloody Border wars :
The dear old hamlet where I first drew breath,
With the loud-sounding beechen avenues :
The lonely watch-tower² on the distant height,
Untouched by centuries of wasting time :
The narrowing waters of the shining Firth
That like a wedge of silver cleaves the land ;
And Cumbria's shadowy mountains bounding all.'

¹ Burnswark has been invested with new interest by the discovery, by Dr. Neilson, of overlooked saga evidence that it is the site of the battle of Brunanburh, fought by Athelstan in 937 against a confederate host. (See *The Scottish Historical Review* for October, 1909.)

² Repentance Tower.

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Effective though the above may be, it is not a piece of pure sensuous description like the following :

‘Thrice happy time, when ’mong the blossoming broom
I sported, careless as the aimless winds ;
Or sat among the heather on the moor,
And watched the lark, up-springing from her nest,
And nicely poised upon her tremulous wings,
Go up the heavens with a flood of song ;
Lessening ever in the blinding sun ;
A dark spot in the sky ; a speck ; then lost
A moment, and recovered by her song ;
Then lost again, but still the music fell
Clear, ringing from the cloud ; and still I gazed
After the viewless singer, knowing well
Her nest would draw her to the earth again ;
Till from the azure depths of fervid day
The wanderer floated back into my ken ;
A speck in the deep blue, and then a blot
Upon the snowy fringes of a cloud,
Descending ever, till, her music ceased,
She, with the fevered beat of amorous wings,
Dropped like a stone among the purple blooms.’

Yet more beautiful lines may be extracted from Dr. Milligan’s poem :

‘But though all nature is as fair today
As when my young hands wove the wealth of Spring
In fragrant chaplets, yet I gaze on it
As some fond mother, sitting all alone,
Gazes upon the happy summer fields,
With a small grave between. The change, I know,
Is in myself. Nor cares nor sorrows touch
The flowers or stars, and not a linnet’s song
Is sadden’d by the sharpest grief of man.
Yon amber cloud takes not a sombre hue,
Now that it hangs above the village graves ;
Nor does the sunbeam lose its sunny glow,
Though it may shine upon a dead man’s face.
The rainbow hung above a drownèd world
Was not less radiant than the arch that spans
The land in time of mirthful holiday.
The change is in myself. To glad young hearts
This world is beautiful, and still will be.’

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The Rev. William Bennet, Moffat,—another descriptive poet—was ‘pre-eminently a “son of the Manse,”’ being the fifth in direct descent of a family of ministers of the Church of Scotland.’¹ His father, the Rev. John Bennet, was minister of Ettrick—famous as the scene of Thomas Boston’s labours—and his mother was a daughter of the Rev. Dr. Singer, of Kirkpatrick-Juxta. Born at Ettrick Manse in 1822, William Bennet passed from a school in Edinburgh to the University of that city, and there he studied under such men as Sir William Hamilton, Professor Wilson, Professor Forbes, and Dr. Chalmers. Joining the Free Church at the Disruption, he obtained a licence to preach, but, owing to impaired health, did not seek a settled charge. Devoting his life to literary and scientific pursuits, he wrote for various journals, and aided friends who worked in fields which attracted him by supplying them with information from his inexhaustible stores.² The only volume published by him was a collection of poems by inhabitants of Moffat and frequent visitors to that town, entitled *Lays from Annandale* (1897). The death of Mr. Bennet at his residence, Marlfield, Moffat, on 16th May, 1899, after a long period of bodily weakness, deprived Annandale of a scholar who loved knowledge for its own sake, and of a poet who found intense delight in the contemplation of natural beauty.

Together with a few specimens of his prose, and a prefatory memoir from the graceful and practised pen of his widow—the daughter of Mr. John Ranson, ship-owner and bank agent at Sunderland—Mr. Bennet’s poems were, in 1899, published in a memorial volume entitled *Echoes of the Past*. The pieces which follow are reproduced from that work.

¹ *Echoes of the Past* (Macniven & Wallace, Edinburgh, 1899, p. 5).

² Mr. Bennet had a minute knowledge of Border literature; and the present writer, at the commencement of his study of Dumfriesshire poetry, received from him much serviceable information.

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THE ANNAN.

(From *The King's Holm.*)

There, Annan Water, pure and bright,
The child of pastoral hills afar,
Sweeps through the vale with curve of light
To hazelly bank and ruddy scaur,
Where, waging an unequal war,
His chafing streams abruptly turn,
Still eddying round the sedgy bar
Of Mossland's ousel-haunted burn.

Thence winding onward far and wide,
By grassy holm and greenwood brae,
He wins those looks of strength and pride
Which still attend his onward way
By haunted Spedlins,¹ tall and grey,
By old Lochmaben's wasted bowers,
By Mungo's vale belov'd of May,
By stately Hoddam's groves and towers.

THE DOCK LIMES—DUMFRIES.

Long live the lime trees! still the crowning pride
Of all the burghal landscape, fair and wide.
Long may their stately forms endure, to grace
The verdant holm, the river's radiant face;
And blend, as evening sinks in softened fire,
With gleaming mansion, and with reddening spire.
Still may it yield—that sylvan colonnade—
Joy to the wanderer, to the weary shade.
May lengthening days to fresh luxuriance bring
The tender promise of the new-born spring,
Till, dense and deep, 'neath summer's azure sky,
The solemn grove shall soothe the wearied eye;
While wealth of blossoms, waving light and free,
Shall scent the breeze and lure the roving bee.

¹Spedlins Tower was formerly the residence of the Jardines of Applegarth. In its dungeon a miller named Porteous was imprisoned by the first baronet of the family, who being suddenly called to Edinburgh carried the key of the vault with him and for several days forgot his prisoner. When he sent the key back it was all too late, for the unhappy man had died of hunger. The miller's ghost long haunted the tower.

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Let no rude arm, no ruthless axe invade
The sacred stillness of the dim arcade,
Where dreams of eld each hoary trunk entwine,
And haunt the embowering arches, smooth and fine.

Cease, boding fear of storms in coming time !
What storms prevail to move the steadfast lime ?
Compact and firm, with measured force he shoots,
Skyward his boughs, and deep in earth his roots.
With thews of might he grasps the fertile ground,
And spreads a world of fibres all around ;
While prostrate lie the forest's loftier towers,
Secure and scatheless stand the linden bowers ;
For firmly fixed on basement broad and deep,
In fiercest gales the stem his place may keep.
Thus safely founded, o'er its constant home,
In strength and beauty springs the shadowy dome ;
Type of the steadfast soul, when tempest-tossed,
Where troubles most oppress, victorious most ;
Well-grounded strength ascends in purpose high,
And graces bloom in deathless harmony.

In 1899, the year of Mr. Bennet's death, appeared a fine rendering in English rhyme of 'The Vision of God as represented in Rückert's Fragments,' by the Rev. William Hastie, D.D., one of the most distinguished philosophical and theological scholars of his day. Dr. Hastie was the third son of the late James Hastie, underground overseer of the Duke of Buccleuch's Lead Mines at Wanlockhead, and in that upland village he was born on 7th July, 1842. At Edinburgh University he graduated as M.A., with first-class honours in philosophy, in 1867, and thereafter entered upon a curriculum in divinity. Gaining, at the end of this course, the Pitt Scholarship, he was enabled to pursue his studies further in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. On his return from the Continent he was appointed one of the first two examiners in Theology in Edinburgh University, with the duty of examining conjointly with the professors for the degree of B.D. From December, 1876, to July, 1877, Mr. Hastie held the office of assistant to the Rev. Dr.

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Menzies, of Hoddam, and afterwards he was helper to the Rev. Dr. Gloag, of Galashiels. In 1878 he went to Calcutta as Principal of the Church of Scotland Institution there; but not till his appointment in 1895 as Professor of Divinity and Systematic Theology in Glasgow University did the gentle scholar find adequate scope for his great gifts. He died suddenly at the residence of his brother, in Edinburgh, on 31st August, 1903.

As an editor and translator of German theological classics, Dr. Hastie did much useful work. His chief literary undertaking, however, was the Croall Lecture for 1892, on *The Fundamental Doctrines of the Reformed Theology*. During the last few years of his life, he altered and enlarged that work considerably; and shortly after his death it was published under a new title, *The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles*.

In addition to his rendering of Rückert's *The Vision of God*, and to a translation of the *Spiritual Songs* of Novalis, Dr. Hastie published three books of verse—*La Vita Mia* (1896), *The Festival of Spring from the Divân of Jelâleddîn* (1903), and *Oban Sonnets* (1903). A sonnet on 'Wanlockhead,' printed in *La Vita Mia*, has for Dumfriesshire readers a special interest:

WANLOCKHEAD.

Oft have I vexed myself with jealous fears
Lest thou should'st grow unfaithful to old Love,
And shifting changes of the fickle years
Should thee from thy deep steadfastness remove.
When I have seen how Time's destroying Hand
Hath slacked the cement of our common clay,
And loosed the knitted strength of social band
To bid dividing selfishness bear sway—
Then have I trembled lest the Age's show
Might with its empty glitter lure thine eye;
But now, consoled, again thy heart I know
Beating with all its warm, quick sympathy.
O take it then for deepest love that I
Can think no change in thee although I die!

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Hastie's friend, Thomas M'Kie, who also composed sonnets, was born, on 5th September, 1830, at Dumfries, of which town his father, William M'Kie, had been Provost. He received his education at Dumfries Academy and Edinburgh University, and in 1861 was admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates. Though he soon had a very fair practice, both civil and criminal, Mr. M'Kie did not permit law to monopolise his attention, but took a leading part in public life. He was especially active in promoting the reform of the Government of the Scottish Universities; and when the Act of 1889 came into operation, he was elected a member of the Court of Edinburgh University. As a Liberal, Mr. M'Kie threw himself with ardour into political work, and in 1886, and again in 1892, he contested the County of Dumfries. Literature, however, had always been his chief solace and delight. In 1893 he published the first series of his *Lyrics and Sonnets*. A second series followed in 1903, and both volumes were favourably received. His last book, *Summer Rambles*, appeared in 1906. A few months after the publication of that work the degree of LL.D. was conferred on him by the University of Edinburgh. He died on 22nd December, 1908, leaving a widow—the daughter of the late James Gordon, banker, Dumfries.

Dr. M'Kie's two volumes of verse include about a dozen poems descriptive of rivers and towns. He has some musical stanzas on 'The Thames'—the river of Thomson, Collins, and Gray—and some also on that Dumfriesshire stream by which Burns, in the last eight years of his life, often wandered. But the choicest of M'Kie's purely descriptive pieces is 'The Queen of the North,' a lyric in which Edinburgh, the city of his adoption, is pictured as

'Shadowy, purple, and dun ;
Linking the sea and the land,
Lowlands and Highlands in one.'

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Like Thomas Aird, whom he knew intimately in youth, and to whose memory *Summer Rambles* is dedicated, Dr. M'Kie has frequent references to birds. A sonnet on 'The Nightingale' may be quoted as a characteristic production of his muse :

It was the Nightingale that sang so clear,
From inner shadows of the beechen boughs ;
Charming some star from its angelic sphere,
As Orpheus charmed back his vanished spouse :
Such melody as passionate love allows,
When heart meets heart in youthful dalliance dear,
And no opposing force or barrier's near
To interchange of troth and sweet-pledged vows—
Such melody the pleasing Nightingale
Stole from two lovers, wandering out from sight
Of watchful stars and peering moonshine bright ;
And nightly, he repeating o'er the tale,
Accustomed so his anguished heart to wail,
As imitating Love's intense delight.¹

The death of Alexander Anderson, or 'Surfaceman,' on 11th July, 1909, made a great blank in the roll of Dumfriesshire poets. The youngest son of James Anderson, quarrier (a native of the county), and of Isabella Cowan, he was born on 30th April, 1845, at Kirkconnel, 'in a house situated up "Nannie M'Latchie's Entry," more than halfway up the village.'² His boyhood was spent in south-eastern Galloway, whither his family had removed, and he received a good elementary education at Crocketford in an

'Old, dark, humble school-house
That stood by a little stream.'³

After working for two years in a flag quarry on the banks of Kello Water, Anderson entered the service

¹ *Lyrics and Sonnets*, 1893, p. 82.

² Letter from Mr. Anderson, dated 14th January, 1908.

³ 'The Old School House,' in *The Two Angels, and other Poems*, p. 88.

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of the Glasgow and South-Western Railway, about 1862, being engaged to act as a surfaceman on the line which runs past Kirkconnel. In his experience, as in that of Hugh Miller, physical toil had the effect of making the brain clearer and stronger; and whilst in the employment of the Railway he learned several languages and read deeply in philosophy and poetry. The works by which he was most powerfully influenced at this early stage of his life were Dante's *Inferno*, which he studied in the original, and the poems of Wordsworth and Keats.

In 1870, a poem by Mr. Anderson on 'John Keats' was inserted in *The People's Friend*, a literary miscellany published in Dundee. The lines were marked by colour and freshness; and the editor of the paper saw at a glance that they were the work of a real poet. 'Surfaceman' became a regular contributor to the *Friend*, and often in those distant days

'He smiled

To think the gods had, in their idle moods,
Leant from their windless halls to touch his lips
With consecrating fire, and make him sing—
A working priest of song amid his kind.'¹

Anderson's first volume—*A Song of Labour, and other Poems*—was published at Dundee in 1873. It contained much scholarly verse, and not a few readers were amazed to learn that the author was 'but a humble son of toil, working with pick and shovel on the railway.'² In 1875 'Surfaceman' brought out *The Two Angels, and other Poems*, which comprised 'Alexis,' 'Blood on the Wheel,' a series of sonnets entitled 'In Rome,' and the most successful of his pieces in the Scottish dialect—'Cuddle Doon,' 'Jenny wi' the Airn Teeth,' and 'May Middleton's Tam.' His *Songs of the Rail*, which first appeared in 1878, established his reputation, and became so popular

¹ 'Alexis,' in *The Two Angels, and other Poems*, p. 37.

² Preface to *A Song of Labour, and other Poems*.

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that a second edition was published in 1879, and a third in 1881. *Ballads and Sonnets* (1879), his next venture, consisted mainly of selections from *The Two Angels, and other Poems*; but, being issued by Macmillan & Company, it was read by many who had no previous acquaintance with his verse, and was noticed in *The Contemporary Review* and other influential periodicals.

In 1880 Mr. Anderson became head assistant in the Library of Edinburgh University. He left that library in 1883, on being appointed secretary of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution; but he returned to it in 1886, and from 1905 till his death was chief librarian of the University.

Among Anderson's later works is a volume of translations from Heine, privately printed. He left in MS. 'The Second Death of Lazarus,' a poem, in blank verse, extending to over fifteen hundred lines. The bulk of the poem is a monologue by Lazarus, describing what he knew of Christ.

The most distinctive part of Alexander Anderson's work is contained in *Songs of the Rail*. The poetic possibilities of themes like those dealt with in that book have not had due recognition in this country; and perhaps the only felicitous reference by an English poet of high rank to a railway scene is the following in Mrs. Browning's masterpiece:

'The train swept in,
Athrob with effort, trembling with resolve,
The fierce denouncing whistle wailing on,
Till dying off smothered in the shuddering dark.'¹

The inspired surfaceman of Kirkconnel quickly saw that the Locomotive and the Iron Road were fit subjects for poetic treatment; and 'The Song of the Engine,' 'On the Engine by Night,' and other lyrics show how capable he was of investing such themes with interest. Many a lover of song remembers the thrill he experienced

¹ *Aurora Leigh*, Seventh Book.

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when, in the winter of 1878, these lines by one who still carried the pick and shovel first met his eye :

TO MY READERS.

A worker on the rail, where, day by day,
The engine storms along,
And sends forth, as he thunders on his way,
Wild strains of eagle song.

Then the wild vigour, shooting to its point
Of madness, fills each limb
That strides with one great sweep from joint to joint
Of rails, that under him

Bend, as they feel his sudden, certain grasp,
Or quiver as he reels,
He slips and slides with sullen grind and rasp
Of sternly-rolling wheels.

Or in the night, when darkness like a veil
Curtains the sleep of earth,
He flares along the pathway of the rail
Like a Titanic birth :

As with unwinking eye of glowing white
He tears the night apart,
And with broad spear of palpitating light
(The lightnings of his heart),

He shears the midnight with its shadowy shrouds,
Till every breath and pant
Mirrors and paints itself against the clouds,
Like northern lights aslant.

And swift as thoughts fling arches over space
In some worn giant's dream,
He rushes, crown'd with flame, upon his race,
The god of fire and steam !¹

It is not, however, as the poet who has described with wonderful force and accuracy what Carlyle calls

¹ From *Songs of the Rail*, pp. 9-11.

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'the fire-horses on which we career,' but as an interpreter of Scottish child-life that Anderson is popularly esteemed. Among the later writers in the vernacular he has no equal as a poet of the nursery; and it need not surprise us that such lyrics as 'Cuddle Doon' are household treasures in every part of Scotland.

CUDDLE DOON.

(From *The Two Angels, and other Poems*, p. 72. 'Written in 1874, I think, and in one afternoon.'—Letter from Mr. Anderson.)

The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht
Wi' muckle faucht an' din;
'O, try and sleep, ye waukrife rogues,
Your faither's comin' in.'
They never heed a word I speak;
I try to gie a froom,
But aye I hap them up, an' cry,
'O, bairnies, cuddle doon.'

Wee Jamie wi' the curly heid—
He aye sleeps next the wa',
Bangs up an' cries, 'I want a piece'—
The rascal starts them a'.
I rin an' fetch them pieces, drinks,
They stop awee the soun',
Then draw the blankets up an' cry,
'Noo, weanies, cuddle doon.'

But ere five minutes gang, wee Rab
Cries out, frae 'neath the claes,
'Mither, mak' Tam gie ower at ance,
He's kittlin' wi' his taes.'
The mischief's in that Tam for tricks,
He'd bother half the toon;
But aye I hap them up and cry,
'O, bairnies, cuddle doon.'

At length they hear their faither's fit,
An', as he steeks the door,
They turn their faces to the wa',
While Tam pretends to snore.
'Hae a' the weans been gude?' he asks,
As he pits aff his shoon;

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'The bairnies, John, are in their beds,
An' lang since cuddled doon.'

An' just afore we bed oorsel's,
We look at our wee lambs,
Tam has his airm roun' wee Rab's neck,
And Rab his airm round Tam's.
I lift wee Jamie up the bed,
An' as I straik each croon,
I whisper, till my heart fills up,
'O, bairnies, cuddle doon.'

The bairnies cuddle doon at nicht
Wi' mirth that's dear to me;
But sune the big warl's cark an' care
Will quaten doon their glee.
Yet, come what will to ilka ane,
May He who rules aboon
Aye whisper, though their pows be bauld,
'O, bairnies, cuddle doon.'

Some of the poems on nature written by Mr. Anderson at Kirkconnel deserve to be more widely read. His 'Cuckoo,' for example, is of real value, showing simple and natural feeling. The verses here reproduced from that 'poem about a gowk' would have been appreciated by Wordsworth—one of his masters:

'Each thing to its own depth was stirr'd,
Leaf, flower, and heaven's moving cloud,
As still he piped, that stranger bird,
His mellow May-song clear and loud.

"Would I could see him as he sings,"
When, as if thought and act were one,
He came; the gray on neck and wings
Turn'd white against the happy sun.

.
Two simple notes were all he sang,
And yet my manhood fled away;
Dear God! The earth is always young,
And I am young with it to-day.

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A wondrous realm of early joy
Grew all around as I became
Among my mates a bearded boy,
That could have wept but for the shame.¹

Among the Dumfriesshire lyrists who have passed away since the present century began are two women—Lady Florence Dixie, the famous traveller, who ‘lisped in numbers,’ and Mrs. Sanders, best known as a novelist.

Lady Florence Dixie was born in 1855 at 26 Wilton Crescent, Belgrave Square, London, the town-house of her father, Archibald Douglas, seventh Marquis of Queensberry. When but three years old she lost her father, who was killed in a wood near Kinmount, his seat in Dumfriesshire, by the discharge of his gun. Lady Queensberry being a convert to the Church of Rome, Lady Florence was brought up in the Catholic religion. Her restless intellect, however, failed to find satisfaction in the theology of the Church; and at an age when most girls care for nothing but tennis or hockey she was engaged in a painful struggle with religious doubts. A dramatic tragedy entitled ‘Abel Avenged,’ written in her fifteenth year, and a poem called ‘The Sceptic’s Defence,’ written at sixteen, show the nature of the young thinker’s difficulties.²

In 1875 Lady Florence Douglas married Sir Alexander Beaumont Churchill Dixie, and in 1880 she published *Across Patagonia*, a record of explorations by a party which included two of her brothers as well as her husband and herself. During the Boer War of 1880-1 she acted as war correspondent for *The Morning Post*, displaying in that capacity much courage and resource. *In the Land of Misfortune* (1882) and *A Defence of Zululand and its King* (1882) are fruits of her visit to South Africa. Her later publications include a volume of verse entitled *Songs of a*

¹ *Ballads and Sonnets*, p. 122.

² Both works will be found in the third edition of *Songs of a Child*. (The Leadenhall Press, Ltd., 1902.)

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Child (1901), which passed rapidly through three editions. She died at Glen Stuart, Cummertrees, on 7th November, 1905.

The poems preserved in *Songs of a Child* were written by Lady Florence between the ages of ten and seventeen. It is interesting to note that in one of the earliest of them expression is given to the future explorer's desire for travel in strange places :

'I want to roam and see all spots
As yet untarnished by man's hand,
They mottle our world's face like dots,
Each dot an unexplored fair land.

So up and onward Waif and Stray,
Go, wander midst the beautiful,
And paint their features in a lay
Which shall be quaint and never dull.'

Mrs. Mary Jane Davidson Underwood or Sanders was a daughter of George Underwood, town clerk of Annan. Married at an early age to the Rev. Robert Sanders, minister of Tundergarth, she took advantage of those opportunities for the close study of rural life which the wife of a country parson enjoys, and at length wrote and published her popular novel, *Happy with Either*, a work followed by *Matthew Dale, Farmer*. She died at Underwood, a picturesque house near Lockerbie, on 16th February 1907, in her seventy-fifth year.

Underestimating the value of her poetical pieces, Mrs. Sanders did not put forth any volume of verse ; but the readers of *Chambers's Journal* and *Life and Work* know how qualified she was to teach good lessons in rhyme. Her 'Christian Emblems,'¹ a poem of considerable length which cannot well be represented by one or two stanzas, was much admired by A. K. H. B.

One of the most prominent of the poets who survive and worthily maintain the traditions of Dumfriesshire song is Robert Reid or 'Rob Wanlock,' whose ballads

¹ See *Life and Work* for October, 1883.

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and lyrics give expression to the spirit of the lonely moors in the north of the county. Mr. Reid was born on 8th June, 1850, at Wanlockhead, described by him as

‘A lanely wee toon,
Far hid amang hills o’ the heather sae broon,
Wi’ its hooses reel-rall, keekin’ oot at ilk turn,
Like an ill-cuisten crap in the howe o’ the burn.’¹

After receiving a good education at home, the lad removed to Glasgow, and entered the counting-house of Stewart & M'Donald. Subsequently he became a clerk to William Cross, shawl manufacturer, author of the song, ‘Our May had an e’e to a Man.’ In 1877 Mr. Reid left Glasgow and went to Montreal, where he has been engaged in mercantile pursuits ever since. He is still thoroughly Scottish in sentiment, and his pen never moves so swiftly as when ‘Wanlockhe d’ is his theme.

Two collections of verse have been published by Robert Reid—*Moorland Rhymes* (Dumfries, 1874) and *Poems, Songs, and Sonnets* (Paisley, 1894). The poet of a district where ‘death-white’ mists trail continually along the bare hill-slopes, he delights in the uncanny, and often produces effects that would have been envied by Hogg and Motherwell. He is perhaps seen at his best in ‘Glenballantyne’ and ‘The Whaup,’ poems which are here included by permission of Mr. Reid and his publisher, Mr. Alexander Gardner.

GLENBALLANTYNE ; OR, MY LAST LOOK O’ HAME.

(From *Poems, Songs, and Sonnets*, pp. 159-161. This ballad was written at Wanlockhead about August, 1890. Glenballantyne is a small hill burn running into Enterkin.)

I hae wander’d far i’ the wilds this day,
Owre heichts bent-clad, and in howes sae green ;
I hae heard weird words that I daurna’ say,
And sights that were not o’ the yird I’ve seen.

¹ ‘Wanlock’ (in *Poems, Songs, and Sonnets*, p. 46).

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And sair I misdoot I hae lookit my last
On bonnie green howm and on brairdit lea,
For a freit,¹ like a chirt o' the norlan' blast,
Lies cauld, lies cauld at the heart o' me.

O, licht is the fitstep, leisomely fain,²
Tho' weary wi' raikin' and stiff wi' toil,
That the gloamin' o' life brings back again
To the kindly touch o' its native soil!

To spiel ance mair the stey green hills
Sae lichtly esteem'd when the heart was high,
And dauner again by the wimplin' rills
That croon sae sweet o' the days gane by.

Cauld maun the heart be, twin'd o' its joys,
And weary the weird that heart maun dree
That comes to the scenes o' its youthfu' ploys
Wi' never a spark o' its youthfu' glee.

For me—the blude i' my bosom lap
Wi' a schule-bairn's joy turn'd lowse to play,
When I lookit again on the lane hill tap,
And the glen where I spent life's early day.

And never sae fair did the auld hills seem
I' the years langsyne as they did this day,
When I cross't at the heid o' the Wanlock stream,
Wi' the bird i' the lift, and the blume on the brae.

I hadna' been gane on the muirs a mile,
A mile on the muirs, but barely twa,
When the sun o' the simmer ceas'd to smile,
And the sweet hill win' it was airtit awa':

And a' thing grew sae eerie and lown
By Enterkin-Hass and the Lowther Brae,
I made for the heichts, as I wad ha'e flown,
For laich i' the glens I couldna' stay.

I hadna' been oot on the heichts a mile,
A mile on the heichts, but only three,
When a mist row'd doon on the braid Steygyle,
And happit his buirdly bouk frae me.

¹ 'freit'—a superstitious dread.

² 'leisomely fain'—permissibly glad.

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Sae wan were its faulds, sae dern and wan,
'Twas mair like a flowther o' drivin' snaw,
And I neither could see where the burnie ran,
Nor catch ae note o' its lilt ava'.

And in the glenheid, or ever I wist,
Where the lang witch-bracken is stiff and still,
I yokit wi' them I wad fain ha'e miss't—
The dreid white faces that haunt the hill.

For, richt i' my gate, a' waesome and worn,
The yirdit¹ deid, whase name I beir,
Were waitin' for me, by the muirlan' burn—
An awsome trystin' o' dule an' fear.

The dear deid faces—the lips I've kiss't—
The een that langsyne look't luvè i' my ain—
They gapit and glowre't frae the muirlan' mist,
And they fley'd me, and into the mist again:

And up on the heichts I could hear their cries;
I can hear them yet! I sall never tine
The gruesome dreid at my heart that lies
Sin' the sauls o' my kinsfolk spak' wi' mine!

Ye may busk i' yer brawest, Glenballantyne burn
(And o' lown sweet beauty ye ha'e your share);
But a' my thochts frae your memories turn,
And I'll taigle at e'en i' your neuks nae mair.

Farewell, green Lowther—corrie and brae!
A lang fareweel ye may tak' o' me;
I hae hauden a tryst i' your wilds this day,
That'll keep me fey till the day I dee.

THE WHAUP.

(From *Poems, Songs, and Sonnets*, pp. 95-6.)

Fu' sweet is the lilt o' the laverock
Frae the rim o' the clud at morn;
The merle pipes weel in his mid-day biel',
In the heart o' the bendin' thorn;
The blythe, bauld sang o' the mavis
Rings clear in the gloamin' shaw:
But the whaup's wild cry in the gurlly sky
O' the moorlan' dings them a'.

¹ 'yirdit'—buried.

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For what's in the lilt o' the laverock
Tae touch ocht mair than the ear?
The merle's lown craik in the tangled brake
Can start nae memories dear;
And even the sang o' the mavis
But waukens a love-dream tame
Tae the whaup's wild cry on the breeze blawn by,
Like a wanderin' word frae hame.

What thochts o' the lang gray moorlan'
Start up when I hear that cry!
The times we lay on the heathery brae
At the well, lang syne gane dry;
And aye as we spak' o' the ferlies
That happen'd afore-time there,
The whaup's lane cry on the win' cam' by
Like a wild thing tint in the air.

And though I ha'e seen mair ferlies
Than grew in the fancy then,
And the gowden gleam o' the boyish dream
Has slipp'd frae my soberer brain,
Yet—even yet—if I wander
Alane by the moorlan' hill,
That queer wild cry frae the gurlly sky
Can tirl my heart-strings still.

Sir James Crichton-Browne, Crindau, Dumfries, whose songs entitle him to a place in this book, is the eldest son of the late Dr. W. A. F. Browne, Commissioner in Lunacy. He was born on 29th November, 1840, and was educated at Dumfries Academy, at Trinity College, Glenalmond, at Edinburgh University, and in Paris. Having become distinguished as Medical Director of the West Riding Asylum and a lecturer on mental diseases, he was, in 1875, appointed Lord Chancellor's Visitor in Lunacy. In recognition of his position as a specialist on brain disease, and of his services to education and medical science, he received the honour of knighthood in 1886. Sir James is a Fellow of the Royal Society, and for twenty years he has been vice-president and treasurer of the Royal Institution of Great Britain. He

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is a Doctor of Laws of the Universities of St. Andrews and Aberdeen, and a Doctor of Science of the University of Leeds. His publications in book form are *Over-pressure in Elementary Schools* (1884), *Education and the Nervous System* (1885), *The Nemesis of Froude* (1904), *The Prevention of Senility* (1905), and *Parcimony in Nutrition* (1908).

Two stanzas of an excellent song which was set to an old tune, harmonised by Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, may be given as a specimen of Sir James Crichton-Browne's verse :

THERE BE NO FRIENDS LIKE OLD FRIENDS.

There are no friends like old friends,
Or low our lot or high be,
There are no friends like old friends,
Or distant they or nigh be ;
When Fortune smiles, the old friends
With happiness aglow be,
And when she frowns, they closer press,
The heavier the woe be.

There are no wines like old wines,
That mellow, red, and bright be ;
In them we'll pledge the old friends
That with old smiles bedight be.
Each new day brings its new friends,
Whose words and looks all fair be ;
But true and trusty old friends,
Like old wines, past compare be ;
But true and trusty old friends,
Like old wines, past compare be.

Dr. John Johnston, author of an interesting volume entitled *Musa Medica*, is the elder son of the late William Johnston, a prominent citizen of Annan, and was born in that town on 8th December, 1852. From Annan Academy he passed to Edinburgh University, where in 1874 he graduated as M.B., C.M., and in 1877 received the degree of M.D. Dr. Johnston has long had an extensive practice in the busy manufacturing town of

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Bolton. In addition to *Musa Medica* (1897), he has published *A Visit to Walt Whitman and some of his Friends* in 1890 (1898), *Wastage of Child Life* (1908),¹ *Health in the Home* (1909), and numerous pamphlets on foreign travel and other subjects. *A Visit to Walt Whitman*, his best-known book, was pronounced satisfactory by 'The Good Gray Poet,' who once remarked: 'The Doctor superbly handled his material—or let it handle itself.'

Musa Medica consists mainly of pleasing descriptive poems, and of spirited songs written for use at medical gatherings. Here is a picture from 'A Blackpool Sunset,' one of the finest of Dr. Johnston's poems:

'The evening tide is ebbing peacefully,
Low-hanging clouds lie o'er the tranquil sea,
No sound disturbs the silence, save the dirge
Of mighty Ocean and the ceaseless surge
Of white-topped wavelets curling on the sand,
Or breaking gently on the pebbly strand.'

Robert William Mackenna—another Lancashire doctor of Dumfriesshire birth—gained by his 'Spenser in Ireland' Professor Masson's poetry prize in the University of Edinburgh in 1895, and two years later published a volume under the title of *Verses*. The second son of the Rev. Robert Mackenna, he was born in Martyrs' Free Church Manse, Dumfries, in 1875, and was educated at Dumfries Academy, Edinburgh High School, Edinburgh University, and in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and Copenhagen. After studying arts and medicine simultaneously for six years, Mr. Mackenna graduated in 1898. Since 1899 he has been in practice as a doctor in Liverpool, where he is now a specialist on dermatology. He has forsaken the Muses, but is a frequent contributor to the medical journals. Recently he published a translation from the French of an important work on electro-therapeutics.

Dr. Mackenna's book of verses is divided into two

¹ The Fabian Society issued a third edition of this work in 1909.

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parts. The first part contains pieces on subjects of general interest; the second is devoted to medical lays. His best poems are 'Spenser in Ireland' and 'The Thrush.' The latter piece concludes thus:

' No melancholy note
Frets his mellifluous voicings, all his joy
Flows in his song. Quaver, and trill, and shake,
Blent into dulcet harmony, float out
Upon the listening air; but darkness falls
O'er the green woodland and the distant glade;
And the sweet singer ends his melody.'

Lord Alfred Douglas, author of *The City of the Soul*, though born in England, may be regarded as a Dumfriesshire man—and he so regards himself—owing to his descent from one of the ancient historical families of the county. The third, and second surviving, son of the eighth Marquis of Queensberry,¹ he was born on 22nd October, 1870, at Ham Hill, near Worcester, and was educated at Winchester (in the house of the Rev. John Trant Bramston), and afterwards at Magdalen College, Oxford. Much of his youth was spent at Kinmount, the family seat. Lord Alfred began his literary career in 1895, when he published at Paris a book of original poems, with a French prose translation. A thousand copies of the work were sold, and the volume was translated into Italian, Dutch, and Hungarian. Many of the pieces embraced in the collection were reprinted in *The City of the Soul*, which was published anonymously in London, in 1899, and has passed into several editions. Lord Alfred Douglas's later books are *Sonnets* (1909), and three volumes of clever light verse. In May 1907 he became editor of *The Academy*. Lord Alfred married, in 1902, Olive Custance (only surviving child of Colonel Custance, C.B., late Grenadier Guards), who is herself a gifted poetical writer. As

¹ Lord Queensberry in 1881 published a book of verse entitled *The Spirit of the Matterhorn*.

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an example of his Lordship's verse the author of this book is permitted to give the following sonnet :

TO OLIVE.

(From *Sonnets*, p. 10.)

When in dim dreams I trace the tangled maze
Of the old years that held and fashioned me,
And to the sad assize of Memory
From the wan roads and misty time-trod ways,
The timid ghosts of dead forgotten days
Gather to hold their piteous colloquy,
Chiefly my soul bemoans the lack of thee
And those lost seasons empty of thy praise.

Yet surely thou wast there when life was sweet,
(We walked knee-deep in flowers) and thou wast there,
When in dismay and sorrow and unrest,
With weak bruised hands and wounded bleeding feet,
I fought with beasts and wrestled with despair
And slept (how else?) upon thine unseen breast.

The Rev. Thomas Scott Cairncross, author of *The Margin of Rest* (London, 1901) and *The Return of the Master* (Langholm, 1905), was for over five years minister of the South United Free Church, Langholm, and many pieces were composed by him in the library of his beautiful manse near those Eskdale slopes

‘Where God spilt the wine of the moorland,
Brimming the beaker of hills.’¹

Mr. Cairncross, who is a descendant of the old Border family of Cairncross of Hillslap (mentioned by Scott in *The Monastery*), was born at Lesmahagow on 1st April, 1872. He graduated in Glasgow as M.A. and as B.D., and afterwards studied at Marburg under Weiss and Hermann. In 1901 he was unanimously called to Langholm, and in 1907 to Bankside Church, Old Kilpatrick. On the union of the latter congregation

¹ ‘Langholm,’ in *The Return of the Master*.

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with that of Bowling, Mr. Cairncross became minister of the joint congregations.

Some of his most interesting poems are imitations of the rhymeless rhythms of Matthew Arnold and of W. E. Henley. Whatever his rhythm, Mr. Cairncross handles it carefully, and his lyrics betoken a delicate poetic insight. He has written much of the Border, and much that might be quoted. The dedication of *The Return of the Master* is a representative piece :

Where the brown hills slope and fall
To the Solway and the sea,
And the grey gulls sobbing call
Each to each and each to me,

There the shepherd with his flock
In the quiet passes free,
Dreaming dreams ; and who shall mock
Or weary thee, or weary thee ?

The sun leans on the Western Gate
Meditative ; on the lea
Time is housing, and shall wait
To gather me, to gather me.

All day long the shuttle flew,
Now the loom shall empty be ;
But before I fade from view
These to thee, these to thee.

The Rev. Herbert Anderson Whitelaw—also a minister of the United Free Church—published at Dumfries, in 1908, *God's Chariots, and other Verses*. The third son of the Rev. Dr. Whitelaw, Kilmarnock, he was born in 1874. From Kilmarnock Academy he went to Glasgow University, whence he passed to the United Presbyterian College, Edinburgh. Licensed to preach in 1898, Mr. Whitelaw, after a short experience as assistant in the John Ker Memorial Church, Edinburgh, was appointed minister of a congregation of the English Presbyterian Church at Haltwhistle, Northumberland, and in 1904 he became minister of Townhead Church,

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Dumfries. The following hymn may serve as an example of his cultured verse :

HYMN.

(From *God's Chariots, and other Verses*, pp. 38-9.)

Amid the surging cares of life
That steal away its calm,
O Saviour, whisper words of peace,
And bring the captive soul release :
The wounded, heal with balm.

Earth may decay and time grow old :
For ever is Thy name.
The ages come, the ages go,
The human tide must ebb and flow ;
But Thou art still the same.

Temptations gather round us, Lord,
In form and power renewed,
O teach us to resist the wrong !
In all our weakness we are strong
If by Thy strength endued.

Should nights of sorrow chill the heart,
And prove our love is vain,
Oh, kindle there with living fire
A holy flame ! and thus inspire
A love that will remain.

Should doubt o'ershadow as a cloud
And faith no longer see,
On wings of hope we then would soar
To where the noon-day sun no more
Is veiled in mystery.

Should truth's foundations seem to shake
Upon Time's shifting sands,
Remove the mists that now conceal
The Rock of Ages, and reveal
Where truth for ever stands.

Then speak, and let Thy servants hear
The voice of love divine.
Away from thoughts and words of men
We fain would hear Thee speak again,
And know the voice is Thine.

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In 1907, the Rev. James Bell, minister of Whiteinch Congregational Church, Glasgow—a native of Annan—published *Songs of Nature and Faith*. The younger son of the late Captain Bell, Annan—a descendant of substantial Annandale yeomen whose farm had the poetical name of Laverock-Ha'—Mr. Bell was born in 1851. He studied at Annan Academy and Edinburgh University, and in 1876 was ordained minister of Crieff Congregational Church. After remaining at Crieff for a few years, he removed to Aberdeen, where Skene Street Congregational Church was built during his pastorate. In 1882, he was called to Wycliffe Church, Hull, and in 1897 to his present charge.

Mr. Bell has published two able prose works, *George Eliot as a Novelist* (Aberdeen, 1888) and *Biblical and Shakespearian Characters Compared* (Hull, 1894). His volume of poetry, as the title shows, is made up of descriptive and religious pieces. 'Annan Water,' one of his *Nature Songs*, is full of charm.

ANNAN WATER.

(From *Songs of Nature and Faith*, Glasgow, pp. 18-19. The verses were originally published in *The Annandale Observer*, Sept. 1892.)

Annan Water, sweet and fair,
Always coming, going,
Blithe about thee is the air,
Pleasant is thy flowing!

Steeped in boyhood's golden dream,
Magic lights and shadows,
Sing for aye, enchanting stream,
Through enchanted meadows.

Thee I loved in days gone by,
Days too few and fleeting!
With a love that will not die
Till my heart cease beating.

Never asked I once where rose
Welling up thy fountains,

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Babbling 'mid the deep repose
Of the distant mountains.

'Twas enough with joy to see
How thy waters glistened,
Gliding on by bank and lea,
As I lay and listened

To their murmur soft and low
O'er my spirit stealing,
Mingling with my fancy's flow,
One with thought and feeling.

Then I seemed to float away
On thy bosom's gleaming,
Past the glare of common day,
To the shores of dreaming.

Annan Water, sweet and fair,
To the Solway flowing,
Blithe about thee is the air,
Pleasant is thy going!

Mr. Walter Thomas Hawkins, manufacturer, Huddersfield, is another lyrist for whom the Annan is 'steeped in boyhood's golden dream.' Though a native of Tilbury—where he was born in 1855—Mr. Hawkins regards Annan as his own town, for he came from the banks of the Thames to the Solway shore in childhood, and his education was received at Annan Academy. He has published in book form a poem entitled *Bolter's Barn* (1888), and he is now preparing for the press a collection of prose idyls and lyrics, contributed to various magazines. Some of his poems are very dainty.

MY LOVE.

(From the Author's MS.)

My Love has eyes of heavenly hue,
My Love has trusting heart and true,
And faith in me unshaken;
She hangs upon my lightest smile,
And uses every witching wile
My interest to awaken.

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When I am sad, upon my breast
She lays her little head to rest,
 With sweet solicitation;
Around my neck her arms entwine,
That I may deem her wholly mine—
 Oh, sweet infatuation!

I would not sell one smile of hers
For all the joy the world confers,
 When loudest 'tis applauding;
No earthly pleasure can eclipse
One kiss from her sweet ruby lips,
 When amorously marauding.

I know not why she loves me so—
In truth, I hardly care to know—
 Nor who such fondness taught her;
For surely 'tis enough for me
To know I love her, and that she
 Is—just my little daughter!

Mr. Joseph Jardine, who contributes largely in verse to the Dumfriesshire papers, is also English by birth, but he comes of a good Annandale family. He was born at Blackburn in 1849, and was educated chiefly at Clare Hall Academy, Newington, Edinburgh. For many years Mr. Jardine acted as cashier in Peel Mill, Blackburn, but in 1887 he rented Croftheads, near Annan, and became a farmer. In a lyric entitled 'My Garden,' he has a happy reference to the countless daffodils in the old garden at Croftheads—

 'Quaint fairies, yellow-gowned,
That dance to strains unheard by mortal ear.'

He now lives in the town of Annan, enjoying 'lettered peace.'

Like Mr. Jardine, Mr. John Anderson, clothier, Dumfries, has hitherto been content to publish his verses in periodicals. Under the *nom-de-plume* of 'Alpha Beta,' he has contributed many pleasing poems and interesting articles to *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard* and other

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papers. Born at Dumfries in 1879, he belongs to one of the respectable old trading families of the town. His great-great-grandfather commenced business as a clothier in Dumfries in 1796, and the family occupation has not changed since that date. Mr. Anderson is most successful in his poems on nature. There is beauty in these lines from a piece descriptive of the yellow crocuses of February :

‘ A band of fairy knights, who shake
In Winter’s face each shining spear !’

Among the singers connected with Dumfriesshire who are still living, there are several ladies ; and to them the last few pages of this book must be devoted.

Brief reference may first be made to two ladies, resident in Annan, who have published graceful lyrics in magazines, but who have not yet issued volumes,—Mrs. Katharine Cross, *née* Gillespie, wife of Mr. M. M. Cross, The Park, and Miss Annie Steel, L.L.A., The Croft, a daughter of the late George Steel of Newington. Mrs. Cross, who while still a school-girl in her native city of Liverpool, was a valued contributor of verses to *The Messenger for the Children*, a magazine issued by the Presbyterian Church of England, writes mainly on religious subjects. Many of Miss Steel’s poems illustrate fisher life on the Solway. The tragic side of that life appeals to her :

‘ Only a sea that no ship could ride,
Only a boat that no hand could guide,
Only the treacherous Solway tide,
And a maid on the wind-swept shore !’

Better known to readers of Dumfriesshire poetry than either of the ladies mentioned in last paragraph is Mrs. Dobie—wife of Mr. Alexander Dobie, solicitor, Maxwelltown—most of whose pieces have been published under her maiden name of Mary J. Murchie. Her father, who was a classical master in Glasgow, died when

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she was but a few months old; and her early days were mostly spent in the valley of the Dryfe—a river whose lilt has been caught in a song by Mrs. Dobie's maternal grandfather, the late William Gardiner, Sibbaldbie :

‘ Bonnie Dryfe, my native stream,
I have loved thee lang and dearly,
Glancing in the sunny beam,
Glinting through the bracken clearly.’

In 1900 Mrs. Dobie published at Dumfries, *Songs and Lyrics*, a small collection of pieces which had been contributed by her to *Chambers's Journal* and other magazines. The vernacular is used with effect in ‘By Yon Burnside,’ the song which has the place of honour in her book :

‘ Oh, the sweetest flowers o’ spring grow by yon burnside,
Fu’ blythe the birdies sing down by yon burnside !
An’ happy memories
O’ childhood’s careless days
Roun’ ev’ry neuk o’t cling, down by yon burnside.’

Mrs. Amy M. Smith, a writer both of religious and of secular verse, is a daughter of the late Thomas Oliphant, Edinburgh. Born in that city in 1852, she lived there till 1871, when she married the late James Smith of Craighielands, in the parish of Kirkpatrick-Juxta. As ‘Amy Dunsmuir’ she has published two novels—*Vida* (Macmillan, 1880) and *Claire* (MacLehose, 1889). Her only collection of poems is a privately printed volume entitled, *Sonnets, etc., by A. M. S.* Some of her pieces have been published in such literary papers as *The Spectator*. They are all fresh in thought, and they display a fine gift of expression.

GOD’S WILL.

‘ God’s Will ’—the words so run,
With patient sigh and tear of sad resigning,
—But shall we not, when happy suns are shining,
Say too, His will is done ?

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To sorrow-stricken eyes
God's Will a dark and sombre suiting weareth,
But in the joys of life no less it shareth,
In many a brighter guise.

The golden beams that fall
In summer forest, where the doves are cooing,
Autumn's rich beauty, Spring-time's fair renewing,
—Did He not will them all?

All noble piles that rear
Their stately heads—He gave their form and measure ;
The artist paints and sings by His good pleasure
Who made the eye, the ear.

Where friendship makes men one
In sacred bond, or where true hearts and tender
Draw each to each in Love's most glad surrender,
His will—what else?—is done.

Kind memories of the past
In calm old age, Youth's brave and glorious dreaming,
The mirth in little children's faces beaming,
—His will, from first to last!

So we, when days are bright,
May take with fearless hand the cup He sendeth,
Nor ever doubt His gracious will intendeth
All innocent delight.

Another interesting writer is Miss Isa Gillon Fergusson, author of *Parables in Song*, a volume published by James Nisbet & Co. in 1889. Miss Fergusson's father was the late Robert Don Gillon Fergusson of Isle, and her mother the eldest daughter of the late James Curle, writer, Melrose. Though she was born at Melrose, her early associations are connected chiefly with Edinburgh, where her family resided in winter, and with Isle, an estate which for many centuries has been owned by the Fergussons. Part of Isle House, where Miss Fergusson wrote her best songs, with the murmur of the Nith in her ears, is an ivied tower, dating back to 1587 and occupying the site of a yet older building. According to family tradition, Isle owes

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its peculiar name to Robert the Bruce. Breakfasting at Dalswinton during a flood on the Nith, the Scottish leader saw his follower Fergusson's place surrounded by the water, the river and Ellisland Burn having broken their banks, and sending for the proprietor he recommended him to give his estate the name of 'Isle.'

The poems of Miss Gillon Fergusson are full of tender thoughts, and they have a pleasing melody. Her 'Mission of the Flowers' might have been written by Miss Havergal, while there is a quaintness suggestive of the influence of George Herbert in her 'Heart's Wish.'

It is interesting to know that Miss Fergusson wrote three of her longer poems—'A Summer Day by the River,' 'The Song of the River,' and 'Falling Blossoms'—on the banks of the Nith just below Isle, and 'A Spray of Ivy,' in which a view from the house is described, in a room in the ancient tower. 'The Chaffinch's Love-Song,' a true lilt of the Spring, was composed 'one lovely day late in April in the old orchard at Isle, under the shade of hoary apple trees covered with pink and white blossoms.'¹

From 'THE CHAFFINCH'S LOVE-SONG.'

(Parables in Song, pp. 104-5.)

The big chestnut buds still were sticky and brown,
And young leaves of poplar were covered with down,
When I called to her early one bright April day,
As she sat in the sun on a grey willow spray,
'Did you ever before see so glossy a vest,
Or smoother tail-feathers, or such a fine crest?'
But she flirted her tail as she turned her quick eye,
'If you want me, sweet sir, you must after me fly.'
 'Car-oo, tweet, tweet, tweet,
 Would you woo? tweet, tweet, tweet,
Come sue for my love, and come follow me fleet.'
'I follow, I follow, I love you the best,
Come fly with me, sweetheart, and build us a nest.'

¹ Letter from Miss Fergusson, 17th November, 1902.

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She sent me a trill from her dear little throat,
'I love you, car-oo,' was her answering note.
Though we searched all the garden, no nook could we find
Like this old apple-tree, that was just to our mind;
So I said to my sweetheart, 'Love, shall we build here?'
And she answered me, 'Just as it pleases you, dear.'
 'Car-oo, tweet, tweet, tweet,
 Near to you, tweet, tweet, tweet,
Wherever you are 'twill be happiness, sweet.'

We laid a strong framework and fixed it so fast,
That though the tree rocked it resisted the blast,
We made it of mosses, all daintily twined,
With wool and with feathers 'twas cushioned and lined;
I picked her grey lichens to match the tree stem,
And neatly she finished the outside with them.
Then, lifting our eyes to the blue sky above,
We entered it singing, and filled it with love.
 'Car-oo, tweet, tweet, tweet,
 Made by you, tweet, tweet, tweet,
Was ever a nest that was builded so neat?'

But the lady who merits the longest notice in this book is Mrs. Miller Morison, or 'Jeanie Morison,' author of *Ane Booke of Ballades*, and many other works.

Mrs. Jean Morison Campbell Miller Morison was born at Banefield, North Leith, near Edinburgh. She is a daughter of the late Rev. James Buchanan, D.D., LL.D., minister of North Leith and of the High Church, Edinburgh, and subsequently Professor of Theology in the New College, Edinburgh, and of Mary Morison of Hetland, in the parish of Dalton, his wife. The poetess has been twice married. Her first husband was Lt.-Colonel William Rose Campbell of Ballochyle, Argyllshire, who died in 1872; her second husband was the late Hugh Miller, of H.M. Geological Survey, a son of the famous author of that name. She has three surviving children—a son and a daughter by her first marriage, and a son by her second. In 1887 she succeeded her mother in the estate of Hetland, and assumed the name of Morison from her maternal grandfather. It is her custom to

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spend the summer at Morison House, Hetland, and the winter in her native Edinburgh.

Mrs. Miller Morison has published *Snatches of Song* (1873); *Pontius Pilate: a Drama* (1878); *Ane Booke of Ballades* (1882); *Saint Isadora, and other Poems* (1885); *The Purpose of the Ages* (1887); *Gordon: an Our-Day Idyll* (1889); *Sordello: an Outline Analysis of Mr. Browning's Poem* (1889); *Selections from the Poems of Jeanie Morison* (1890); *There as Here, Hints and Glimpses of the Unseen* (1891); *Of Fifine at the Fair, Christmas Eve and Easter Day, etc.* (1892); *Æolus: a Romance in Lyrics* (1892); *Doorside Ditties* (1893); *Rifts in the Reek* (1898); *Sabbath Songs and Sonnets* (1899); and three short prose tales—*Mill o' Forres*, *Miss M'Graw*, and *Sandy Irving's Croft*.

The best of Mrs. Miller Morison's works are *Ane Booke of Ballades*, *Pontius Pilate*, *The Purpose of the Ages*, *Gordon*, and *Rifts in the Reek* (sketches from the history of the Church in Scotland). *Ane Booke of Ballades*, *The Purpose of the Ages*, and *Gordon* need no fresh commendation, the first and second having been praised by Browning, and the first and third by Whittier. In *Pontius Pilate* and *Rifts in the Reek* 'Jeanie Morison' displays much skill in the analysis of character, and in them her phrasing is particularly vigorous. An extract from *The Purpose of the Ages*, and a selection from the ballad book, will serve to illustrate the merits of her poetry.

THE DEATH OF JUDAS.

(From *The Purpose of the Ages*, pp. 193-4.)

On the marble floor

The 'thirty pieces' dashed by desperate hand
Roll towards the veiled Sanctuary,—and through
The astonished worshippers the white, drawn face,
And wild despairing eyes a moment flash
And vanish!

—Down the deep defile,—each step
A stumble in the sudden dark that frights
The noon,—towards Hinnom's haunted vale, reckless

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He plunges as by Furies driven,—alone
In that strange gloom.—Can't be that outer Dark
Whereof He spake?

—Once, as by lurid flash,
Three Crosses gleam 'gainst blackest Heaven, upon
The Place of Skulls, for one dread moment,—then
Night swallows them once more!—

The solid earth
Seems rocking 'neath his feet, as faster aye
And faster on he stumbles,—Devil-driven!—
Through the dark hollow,—up the cold clay slope
Where ragged rocks jut through the dismal soil,—
To where one stunted, lightning-blasted tree
With gaunt bare limbs o'erhangs the precipice!—

A hasty noose, tied by uncertain hands;—
A rotten branch that snaps beneath the weight;—
A plunge into the darkness;—and through rent
And riven frame lost in the black abyss,
The shivering ghost goes out into the night.

THE HONEY-HAIRED LADYE.

(From *Ane Booke of Ballades*, pp. 26-30. It is said that Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, in a passion, cut off her amber tresses to spite her husband, who greatly admired them. Mrs. Miller Morison, in the following ballad, tells a similar story of the wife of a Nithsdale baron.)

The Hassock Hoos¹ stan's on its hill,
The Marr Burn rins fu' clear,
The white kye graze i' the lang rye-grass,
I' the forest feed the deer;
The wee birds twitter i' the cleugh,
The cushat manes i' the shaugh,
Through the summer's heat that lies like a sheet
A' roun' the castle wa'.

A ladye stan's in the auld aik ha',
A ladye in weeds o' woe,
For yestreen they bore her lord frae the door,
Whar nae mair his feet sall go.
The ladye's face it is pale an' prood,
The ladye's step is high,
Her hair is o' the amber fair,
Her e'e like the simmer sky.

¹ In early times the residence of the Douglasses of Drumlanrig was known as the House of the Hassock.

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She stan's afore the auld wa'-press,
 Wi' its key intil her han',—
 What is't that turns her lily face
 Noo red as the wat sea-san',
 An' syne as white as the brunt-oot ash
 O' the flickerin' log at Yule?
 What gars her knees thegither knock,
 As bent wi' a weight o' dule?

What hauds she i' the lily hand
 That shakes as the shakin' tree?
 Nocht but a neivefu' o' amber curls,
 That drap down till her knee;
 They match the locks on the head that stoops
 Sae low ower their glisterin' gowd,
 As the het tears drap on the silken shred
 Sae lichtly roun' them rowed.

'Then whisht ye, whisht ye, my fair ladye,'
 Quoth her nurse o' fourscore years;
 'An' what hae ye fund i' the auld wa'-press,
 Gars drap thae het, het tears?
 Ye stood a queen when they bore him forth,
 Your lord sae true an' brave;
 An' why gie the tears to the auld wa'-press
 Ye gied na to his grave?'

'Oh, whisht ye, whisht ye, my nurse,' she said,
 'Ye ken na the words ye say;
 For weel may I gie to this auld wa'-press,
 Het tears o' dule an' wae;
 Though I drapped na a tear on the green, green sod,
 That hid my dear lord frae me,
 Oh, weel at the sicht o' the auld wa'-press,
 They may blin' me till I dee!

'O nurse! O nurse! i' this auld wa'-press
 He keepit his gauds maist dear:
 The wood frae the cross o' our blessèd Lord,
 Brought by his lang-dead frier
 Frae the Holy Land ayont the seas
 Whar He hung on the bluidy tree;
 The bride-ring, ne'er frae his mither's han'
 Parted till she did dee;

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‘The siller dog-call, his father’s arles,
The day he first shot a deer;
The necklace o’ the coral sae red
Our wee, dead babe did wear—
But oh, my lord, my lovin’ lord,
What for are thae tresses here,
Cuttet in pride to vex the heart,
The heart that lo’ed sae dear?’

‘O nurse! O nurse! can ye tell me noo,
Is it sae our deeds will rise
Frae the awfu’ book, on the awfu’ day,
Afore our tear-blin’ eyes;
An’ break our hearts wi’ the Love they grieved,
As my heart is broke this day,
By the honey-locks i’ the auld wa’-press,
My dear lord lovet sae?’

‘Oh, never again sall the simmer shine,
Wi’ its glint on this head sae wae,
But my tears sall fa’ i’ the aiken ha’
For the lord that loved it sae;
An’ never again the winter’s win’
Roun’ the Hassock Hoos sall blaw,
But my heart it sall mane in dule an’ pain
Ower the honey-locks i’ the wa’!’

CONCLUSION.

The author has now completed his task; and he offers to the public a book designed to occupy a vacant field in Scottish literature. He does not grudge the large expenditure of time involved in the preparation of the volume, for in his opinion no writer can study with minute care the ballads and lyrics of the district in which he resides without doing useful work. If the ancient and modern verse of every county in Scotland were to receive due attention, ample materials for a satisfactory national anthology would at last be provided.

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Whatever the defects of the present work may be, it will show that the poetical literature of Dumfriesshire—though perhaps not likely to appeal to readers whose attention has been practically confined to subjective poetry—is well worthy of close study. The literature of the county is particularly rich in ballads: indeed, with the possible exception of Roxburgh, no other shire has so fine a body of popular verse, or one so unmistakably the outcome of its peculiar life. In every part of Dumfriesshire,

‘The air is full of ballad notes
Borne out of long ago.’

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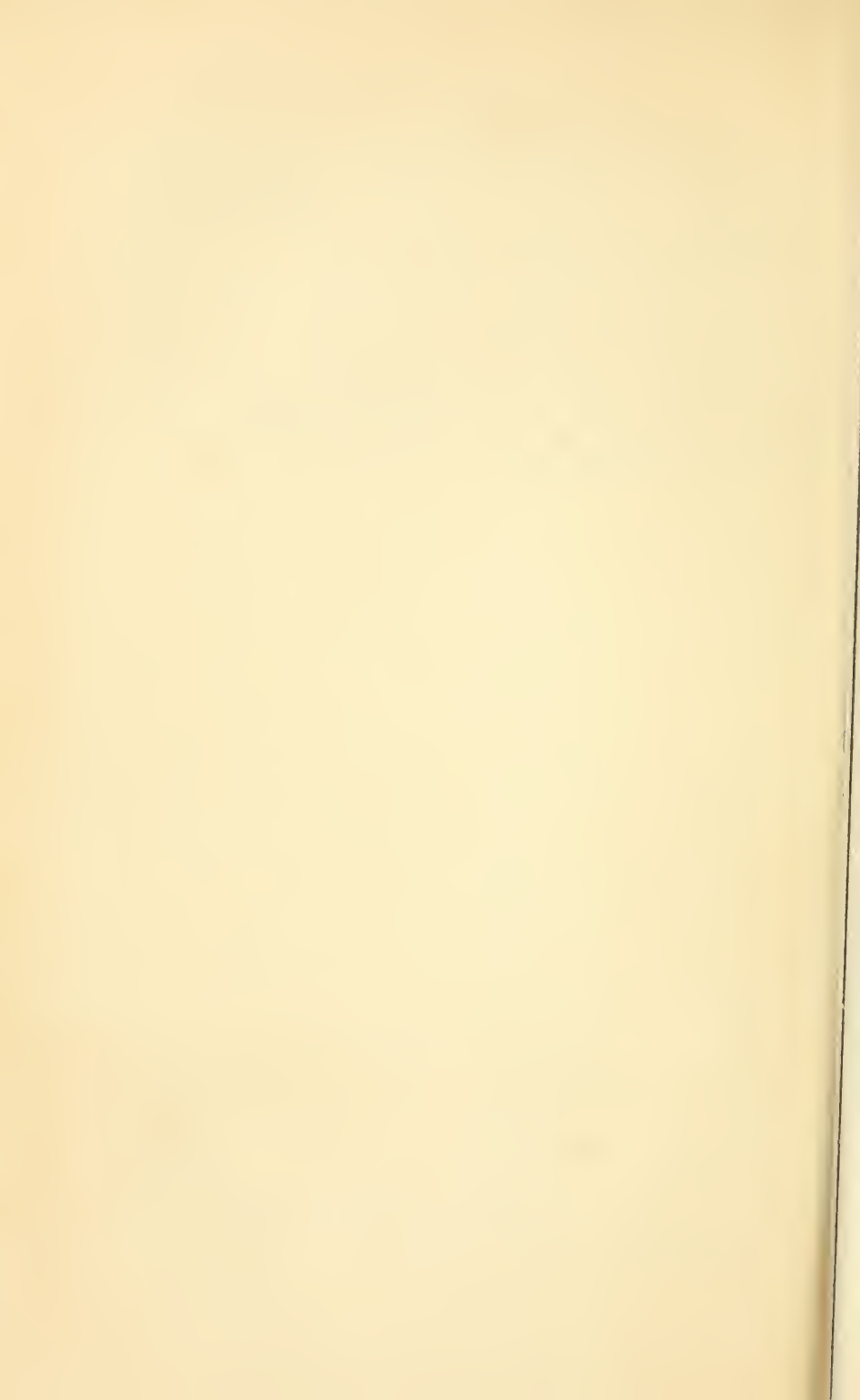
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